Friday, February 4, 2011 | 19 sections | Vol. 35 | No. 58 | P18 | www.inquirer.net | Mobile Alert: Text INQOK REGISTER to 4467 | DELIVERING TODAY, TOMORROW

JANET JACKSON: 'Go Deep' for Manila

By Pudvain Cornejales, Entertainment

AT AGE 44, singer-songwriter Janet Jackson seems well past her prime. But tickets to her concert tonight at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) reportedly sold out barely a | panel 5 A4

NEWS / A2
Widow loses it, disrupts massacre trial

BUSINESS / B1
Bangko Sentral tightens watch on pawnshops

Wanted: A Heidi for customs bureau

By Marlon Ramos

THE BUREAU of Customs, a notorious "flagship of corruption," has suggested that former state auditor Heidi Mendoza join the agency should she decide to return to government service.

| WANTED A-3

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS. FEARLESS VIEWS.

Murder raps vs Ping junked

SNOWBOUND Cars sit on Chicago's crowd Lake Shore Drive, stranded by accidents and drifting snow during Wednesday's blizzard. Over 20 inches of snow had fallen, making the worst snow the third largest recorded in the city. AFP

Appellate court voids arrest order

By Nikko Dizon

SEN. PANFILO "Ping" Lacson's life as a man on the run may be coming to an end.

The controversial senator yesterday scored a major legal victory when the Court of Appeals threw out the murder charge against him over the twin killings in 2000 of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver, and voided a judge's order for his arrest.

But transfer to prosecutors are concerned. Lawyers may still not move the conviction of victims because they said they would file a motion for reconsideration and, if necessary, elevate the case to the Supreme Court.

In his more than a year in hiding, Lacson has been variously reported to be in Europe, somewhere in Asia or right in the Philippines. With yesterday's ruling, his lawyer said he might come out "soon."

In its ruling, the appellate court's special sixth division said that since there was no probable cause "to justify the filing of [an] separate information for murder against petitioner, prosecutor still has constitutional right to be presumed innocent and to cooperate with existing jurisprudence, he should be released from the pain and agony of trial."

It ordered that the warrant of arrest

PAGEBREAK

HEIDI MENDOZA

TRUTH PLAYING HIDE AND SEEK "But today it's Heidi and Hazel," House justice committee chair Teofisto Guingona III says in his opening remarks during the Senate hearing on ordinary corruption. At the end of the hearing, Heidi Mendoza made an emotional appeal to spare her from another appearance at the hearings.

Rabusa: Total of ₱240M set aside for 2 chiefs of staff

By Christian V. Esguerra and TJ Burgonio

IF NOMAR Armed Forces Chief of Staff Angelo Reyes received P50 million in an alleged windfall gift ("palusot"), his two successors were purportedly more treasureful.

While Gloria Macapagal Arroyo yesterday claimed that Defense Undersecretary was allocated around P150 million and Roy Cimatu, P80 million as part of the AFP's palusot system.

But Rabusa, who served as military budget officer from 2000 to 2002,

PAGEBLUE A-9

Garcia plunder case not lost

By Lala S. Salaverria and TJ Burgonio

IT'S UP to the prosecutors now.

The P303-million plunder case against former military comptroller Carlos Garcia is not dead, a Sandiganbayan division said yesterday.

There are ways to revive the case despite Garcia's guilty plea to the lesser offenses of direct bribery and facilitating money laundering under a plea bargain, according to the court, which

GARCIA, B-9

Storm dumps snow over nearly half the US

CHICAGO... A fearsome storm spread a smothering shroud of white over nearly half the United States, snarling transportation, burying parts of the Midwest under 60 centimeters of snow and causing at least 12 deaths.

Fear of millions of people stayed home. The fourth-few tales ventured out. Hood howling winds that turned snowflakes into face-stinging needles.

Chicago's 32 centimeters of snow was the city's third largest snowfall on record. In New York's Central Park, the pathways resembled skating rinks.

The storm that resulted from two clashing air masses was, if not un-

STORM A-8

P-Noy to offer Heidi job in graft fight

By Christine O. Avendaño and TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT AQUINO is open to offering former state auditor Heidi Mendoza a job related to his administration's fight against corruption, but he will seek her consent first.

"I would ask her. I would rather not force somebody," the President said yesterday when asked if he would give Mendoza a job dealing with the government's fight against corruption.

Mr. Aquino said he was quite aware that Mendoza, who testified in the plunder case against the former military comptroller, retired Brig. Gen. Carlos Garcia, had acknowledged "the

forces that she and her family have undergone" as a result of her testimony.

"She has already contributed and if she's willing to contribute more, I would say 'Why not?' But at the same time, I would talk to her first," the President told reporters after attending the inauguration of a Mitsubishi motor

PAGE A-10

Arts bodies to rule if Alcuaz gets state honors

By Lito B. Zulueta
ldzulueta

WILL PAINTER Federico Aguilar Alcuaz, who was voted National Artist for the Visual Arts by two top cultural bodies lose that honor state proclamation is on legal limbo, get a state funeral?

Neither included into the realm of the arts. As a result, Alcuaz's proclamation and conferment as National Artist is still pending at the Supreme Court.

The joint board of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) is expected to meet

CULTURE, A-19

ALCUAZ: National Artist-Elect

Arab world's fate may be set in Cairo

CAIRO... The future of the Arab world, perched between revolt and the contempt of a stunning, tiling order, was fought for in the streets of downtown Cairo on Wednesday.

Tens of thousands of protesters who have reinvigorated the very notion of citizenship in a tumultuous week of defiance prostituted with rebels, homosexuals bombs and a chance of tanks that they would not surrender their revolution to the fill brunt of an embattled government that on viewed their calls for change with violence.

Before details on Thursday's anti-security weapons fire passed of them, leaving at least five people dead and 836 wounded, according to the health ministry.

One tank moved into a bridge overlooking the square and pushed out young men who had been throwing stones at the antigovernment protesters.

Four other tanks took up a position between the pro-Mubarak forces and the largest group of antigovernment demonstrations at the north end of the square near the Egyptian Museum.

It was not immediately clear if the tanks were on behalf of President Hosni Mubarak or part of a wider decision for the Army to begin protecting the demonstrations. The rolli-

ARAB, A-4

NEW TEMPLATE FOR CHANGE Mubarak supporters, some riding camels and horses and armed with sticks, clash with protesters in Cairo's Tahrir Square. AP

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

2/3 (2D)
3 20
16 11
28 25

6/49 LUZ-VIS-MIN
4 9 11 17 26 36
P13,643,142.20

6/55 (3D)
1 5 8
9 0 6
8 8 8

SUPER LOTTO 6/49
4 1 1 5 1 5
6 18 19 31 47 48
P58,942,083.40

Widow loses it, disrupts massacre trial

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE PRESSURES of the trial of the Maguindanao massacre suspects have finally gotten to one of the relatives of a victim.

Wailing and sobbing, Myrna Reblando, widow of Manila Bulletin reporter Bong Reblando, broke down yesterday outside the Quezon City court trying the case, temporarily disrupting proceedings.

Reblando hurled insults at a defense lawyer, after one of them had earlier suggested the victims may have bludgeoned and killed themselves.

Distressed

Reblando was also reportedly distressed by testimonial fare of the suspects, former Maguindanao Governor Andal Ampatuan Jr. and his brother Datu Zaldy Ampatuan, as well as unidentified relatives, would be released before the end of the week.

"Nasaan ang mga hustisya? Mga gunggong! (Where is justice? You idiots!)," a livid Reblando reportedly shouted outside the courtroom as the relatives of other massacre victims tried to calm her.

"Where are those defense lawyers? Where are they? Just try and get them (the suspects) released," Reblando continued to shout in Filipino as she was being led away.

Her blood pressure reportedly shot up to 210/over 100.

Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes was forced to suspend the hearing at 1:40 p.m. after Reblando's wails and curses could be heard in the courtroom even with the door closed.

Doc's testimony

At the time, National Bureau of Investigation medico-legal officer Reynaldo Ilemera was testifying on his autopsy on several of the victims.

Reblando was initially seen sobbing outside the courtroom after the trial started at 9 a.m.

She then began to wail as, one by one, the relatives of the other victims and private prosecutors came out to see what was happening.

"Why did they have to kill them?" she cried as the others tried to assist her inside with a handkerchief.

Reblando then lashed out at the defense lawyers, particularly Andres Manuel.

Two weeks ago, Manuel had suggested during the cross-examination of police medico-legal officer Dean Llabres that the victims could have bludgeoned themselves to explain the contusions many of them suffered.

The victims' relatives had at an chamber that he later gave an interview where he suggested the victims might have killed themselves.

Yesterday, Manuel denied making the latter statement and declined to comment when asked about Reblando's outburst.

"Tell Attorney Manuel that he's dumb," said Reblando as she was led away.

"Our husbands were not fools who went there just to kill each other," added Edicha Tiamson, widow of another victim.

The hearing eventually resumed and Deputy Chief State Prosecutor Richard Saludares apologized to the court for the disruption.

REBLANDO: Traumatized

Autopsy pictures

He said the victims' relatives had been advised they could leave the courtroom if they could not bear listening to the testimony of witnesses or seeing the autopsy pictures of the victims shown during persecution's case.

Ilemera's close cooperated with his testimony on his autopsy of victims Leilani Hadjirul Ampatuan, who was shot four times, and journalist Raoul Morales.

Morales had been shot 12 times, twice in the head, Ilemera said, with an exit wound on the left side of his head the size of a "closed fist."

"She had eight hard gunshot wounds and there was a metal fragment found in the left ventricle of her heart," he added.

In the afternoon, Ilemera continued his testimony, this time on his autopsy on the body of Bienvenido Legarda, another media slain.

7 fatal wounds

Legarda, he said, had been shot up so badly that all seven bullet wounds he suffered were considered fatal.

He said the seventh wound was actually less nasty and not as much as the victim's left thigh.

Legarda was the 58th and last victim whose body Ilemera autopsied a few days after the massacre in Ampatuan, Maguindanao, on Nov. 23, 2009.

Primary suspect Andal Ampatuan Jr., his father Andal Sr., brother Zaldy, other relatives and about 100 soldiers and policemen stand accused of the murder of 57 people in the worst election-related violence in Philippine history.

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Rival Moro rebs clash in land feud; 13 killed

THOUSAND people have been killed and thousands displaced following weeks of clashes over land between rival factions of the two Muslim rebel insurgent groups in Mindanao.

More than 1,000 heavily armed rebels of the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) are involved in the fighting in the village of Kidama, North Cotabato, military officials said.

Eshmael gobernador said Sept. Joseph Swallmoo said 30 hours of MILF commander Kimay and MNLF commander Datal Anabul have been attacking each other with bullets and mortar, fighting for control of a large tract of land in Kauga-an village.

The land feud, officials say, stemmed from a new round of elections on Monday last week, Swallmoo said.

"We came here after Datu Tawal Ugot got him fatally shot (Anabul) shooting at each other," he said.

"One group will take it the other, then back off. The other group will then engage in an attack in retaliation. It is a series of this nature," regional military spokesperson Maj. Mabilwise Jonna told AFP.

He said 13 fighters from both sides had been killed and nine others wounded since the clashes began.

He said 800 families have been evacuated as troops the fighting, which was encouraging for fields and rural villages.

Government troops are not involved and have tried to pacify both sides, he said.

Mohagher Iqbal, who chairs the MILF peace panel, said the two rebel commanders were fighting over 1,000 hectares of rice land, and stressed the dispute was a local one and not between the main rebel groups.

"It is not the MNLF and MILF that are at war. It is just some members of the MILF and some members of the MNLF," Iqbal told AFP.

The local government as well as the leadership of the MILF and MNLF have been trying to broker a ceasefire this week, but fighting continued on Wednesday and there were fears the conflict could escalate.

"It really looks like they don't respect the orders of their respective chief and not start the war. According to some local chiefs in North Cotabato committee, the fighting was triggered by the murder of one of its members, Eduardo Ali, by an MILF member.

The incident was followed by another attack that targeted MILF commander Kumander Bravo in the village of Biladenag. Dozens of houses and Pong in Biladen, and Sibulan ing, Sinsuhon and Salaman in Talitay.

Military intelligence officers in Biladen said they saw dead commanders, who live near each other, originally had a combined total of 1,400 armed followers.

The MILF said it had declared to the United Nations Development Programme as a peace and development community in Kidama town. Our forces will continue to defend the area," Iqbal said.

The MILF, the main Muslim insurgency signed a peace accord with the government in 1996 that gave it control of in autonomous area of Muslim-dominated region in the south.

Edwin Fernandez and Carlo Aguenza, Inquirer Mindanao, and AFP with AP

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TIP

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Monitoring and Controlling Using MS Project
(2 days, March 10 and 16, 2011)

Strategic Business Approach to Project Management
(6 Saturdays, March 26 to April 16, 2011)

In wake of floods, Aquino orders halt to logging

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT Aquino has signed an executive order imposing a moratorium on cutting and harvesting of timber in the country's weeks after heavy rains caused deaths, landslides and flashfloods in Eastern Visayas and in Southern Luzon.

He also ordered the DENR to review all existing agreements and immediately cancel those whose signatories have violated forest laws at least twice, and to close and shutdown sawmills and other wood processing plants that are unable to present proof of sustainable sources of logs for a period of at least five years.

"We want to tighten up ... In the [unwood] processing sector, it was fail to prove that you really have a supply of [legally-cut logs], you won't be allowed to operate. Illegal loggers won't be able to sell," Presidents Aquino told reporters during the inauguration of a water treatment facility in Mount Isarog City.

President Aquino also mandated a biennial log scaling. Dragnet for the needs of those who rely on wood for fuel and other purposes so they would no longer have to cut trees in the forests.

"There's also a national greening program wherein those who need wood for fuel encourage other things will be grown. The disaster to plant and gather what can be used for fuel so there'll be no need to attack the natural forests," President Aquino added.

In his speech during the inauguration rites, President Aquino acknowledged that there are poor folk who rely on logging activities.

"That's why aside from allocating quality seeds that they can plant and earn from, we also asked the Department of Social Welfare and Development to identify the upland farmers who are part of the National Greening Program as primary beneficiaries of the establishment and transfer program," President Aquino said.

In his EO, President Aquino also ordered the creation of a task force that would oversee the implementation of the moratorium.

Exempted from the prohibition are the issuance of tree cutting permits are from for the clearing of road right of way by the Department of Public Works and Highways, the site clearing for tree plantations, silvicultural treatment and other similar activities, "provided that all logs derived from the said cutting permits shall be turned over to the DENR for proper disposal."

The EO also said that tree cutting and gathering activities and possession of timber by the Indigenous People's Rights Act may be allowed "only subject to strict compliance with existing guidelines of the DENR."

"[It] is the obligation of the State to protect the remaining forest cover of the country not only to prevent flash floods and landslides resulting but also to preserve biodiversity ... and allow natural regeneration of residual forests and development of plantation forests," President Aquino said in his EO.

"[It] is imperative to arrest the degradation, pollution and environmental destruction of the river and water systems," he added.

President Aquino also ordered the creation of an Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force to enforce the moratorium. The task force is composed of the environment secretary as chair, the interior secretary, the armed forces chief of staff and the PNP's chief.

"The Task Force is hereby mandated to take the lead in the anti-illegal logging campaign and ensure the implementation of the Executive Order under the supervision of the DENR," President Aquino said.

"It shall also assist the DENR in the enforcement of other environmental laws," he added.

President Aquino said the Department of Education shall be given priority in the use of all confiscated logs.

Baguio temp falls to 9.4 °C

By Kristine L. Alave

BAGUIO City was set to exhibit this year yesterday with the mercury dropping to 9.4 degrees Celsius in the morning, according to the weather bureau.

The city's previous low for this year was 9.6 degrees Celsius recorded last Jan. 4. The coldest temperature in the city was recorded at 6.3 degrees Celsius on Jan. 16, 1961.

Metro Manila was also uncharacteristically cold yesterday, with the temperature recorded at 19.8 degrees Celsius. But that was not enough to erase this year's record low of 19.5 degrees Celsius, also posted last month.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the cold weather was the result of a surge of the northeast monsoon, which brings the winter air from the northern hemisphere.

Pagasa also reported that a low pressure area was sighted near the Zamboanga Peninsula, expected to bring widespread rains over the western portions of the country.

PH forests one of world's most threatened—NGO

By Kristine L. Alave

YEARS of logging and invasive human activities have made Philippine forests one of the world's most threatened, according to a report by the Conservation International.

The Philippines' tropical forests ranked fourth in the group of 10 most threatened forests that the CI has been monitoring, the Washington, DC-based NGO said.

Only about 6 percent of the country's forests remain as natural habitat for species, the CI said.

CI Manuel Ingwiratmoel Ingpig for the deforestation as well as the clearing of forest lands for food production and other activities as most the needs of the country's doing population, which currently stands at around 90 million.

"Historically logged for timber products, today the remaining forests are also being cleared for farming and to accommodate the needs of the nation's high population growth rate and severe rural poverty. The livelihoods of around 80 million people are highly dependent on natural resources," the CI report said.

The other forests in the most threatened list are found in the Indo-Burma region, New Zealand, Sundaland, Atlantic forest in Brazil, Southwest China, California, Eastern Africa, Madagascar and Indian Ocean islands, and Eastern Afromontane.

CI said the country's green cover is home to flora and fauna that can only be found in the Philippines.

But many of the endemic species are now confined to "fragments of forest cover ing only seven percent of the original footprint, it said.

Environment Secretary Ramon Paje said the environment department aims to rehabilitate the 9 million hectares of denuded forest land for the Philippines. He said the country's forest about 2 percent of its forests each year.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Education recently announced a massive greening program to improve the country's forest cover under the forests for the Future project.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

FEBRUARY 4 (Friday)
Psalter Week 4
4th Week in Ordinary Time
Ps 27:1, 3, 5, 8b-9abc
The Lord is my light and my salvation.

1st Reading: Heb 13: 1-8

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to offer hospitality; you know that some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember prisoners as if you were with them in chains, and the unfortunate as those who are suffering, forasmuch as you also have a body. Marriage must be respected by all and husband and wife faithful to each other; God will punish the immoral and the adulterous.

Devote yourself to money, be content with having enough for today, for God has said: I will never forsake you or abandon you, and so shall confidently say: The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me? Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Consider their end and imitate their faith. Christ Jesus is the same today as yesterday and forever.

Gospel: Mk 6: 14-29

King Herod also heard about Jesus because his name had become well known. He thought: "I had John beheaded; yet he has risen from the dead!"

Or this is what had happened: Herod had ordered John to be arrested and had him bound and put in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whom Herod had married. For John had told Herod: "It was not right for you to live with your brother's wife." So Herodias held a grudge against John and wanted to kill him, but she could not because Herod respected John ... [description] her chance on Herod's birthday. On that occasion the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, and she delighted Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want and I will give it to you." And he swore to her as an oath many times, "I will give you anything you can ask, even half my kingdom." She went out to consult her mother. "What shall I ask for?" The mother replied, "The head of John the Baptist." The girl hurried back to the king and told him her request: "I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist, here and now, on a dish."

The king was very displeased, but he would not refuse in front of his guests because of his oath. So he sent one of the bodyguards with orders to bring John's head. The man went to the prison, then he brought the head on a dish and gave it to the girl. And the girl gave it to her mother. [full text here]

Not only was Jesus' name known as well (as if) because of his mission that was just then dead. Even for to the young disciple before Herod as the cult of a king fallen dictator who, under the Jewish charm, for the dream, full of the other half of humanity. But behind the greatness of any name is the mother who gave birth and cared for him, or the wife who waited for to dinner with her returning from and support for him, or the friend who is always ready to listen, to love with patience and tender trembling.

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With great respect and admiration, **I remain respectfully yours**.

Jose Mari Moraza

"Sa gitna ng tukso, pangungurakot -
Huwag kang manghina at manatiling nakatutok sa tunay na layunin"----

-HM

Airport, media men reach accord on security

By DJ Yap

THE NAIA-A International Airport Authority (Maia) and journalists covering the Manila Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) have agreed on a compromise over the new security policy implemented at the Naia this month restricting media access to the terminals.

Although the reporters and photographers were issued new identification cards with limited access, a mechanism was agreed where they can borrow "media" ID cards from the media affairs division with virtually the same level of access as their previous passes.

The only difference from the old system is that the journalists are now required to log their comings and goings with the media affairs office, and to return the on-duty cards at the end of the day.

New protocol

Without these security passes, media members will require ID cards issued not beyond the arrival lobbies of the Naia terminals, according to Manila Ninoy Aquino International Airport General Manager Jose Angel Honrado.

The new protocol drew objections from several members of the airport press, but Honrado insisted it was necessary to eliminate security risks.

The restrictions on access, which also cover all airport workers, were supposed to eliminate the practice of facilitating entry of passengers by employees, sometimes in exchange for cash, as well as the practice of fetching arriving relatives at the terminals.

The new policy has affected all airport and airline personnel, and employees of government agencies like the immigration, customs and quarantine bureaus, and the police.

Honrado said too many people, even those who do not have business inside the terminal, have been enjoying unrestricted access to "exclusive areas." All access passes are now limited to Honrado, his assistants and the terminal managers.

Revamp confirmed

Meanwhile, Honrado confirmed yesterday the revamp of personnel in the Maia assisted by a reshuffle of Manila terminal managers and filling a vacant secretary general manager position.

The reshuffle will affect five major positions and several cabinet-level officials.

The new appointments are to take effect on Feb. 7.

Terminal 1 manager Orestes Lim will now be supervising operations at Terminal 3, while his successor, Danny Rosario, will replace him at Terminal 1.

The new Terminal 2 manager is lawyer Cecilio Bedida, who formerly headed the Maia's business development and concession management department.

Lawyer Cecilio Bedida, the Terminal 2 manager, has been appointed assistant general manager for airport development.

Honrado said he has yet to decide on a new manager for the domestic terminal, but was seriously considering Rosario Gonzalez, the officer in charge of the Maia's electrical and mechanical engineering department.

Under observation

Although he has yet to appoint any official papers, Honrado said the appointments are unopposed, barring unforeseen circumstances.

"When I first got here, they asked if there was going to be a revamp. But I said I have to see the people of Naia jobs first before I make my decisions, instead of just blindly listening to other people's advice," he said.

SC: Lakas-Kampi merger is final

THE SUPREME Court (SC) has affirmed with finality the legality of the merger of the Lakas-CMD and Kampi (Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino) parties, throwing out the motion for reconsideration filed by former Speaker Jose de Venecia.

In a notice released yesterday by clerk of court Ent Ignacio Vidal, the high court ruled that De Venecia did not present new arguments in his pleading that would merit a reversal of its Dec. 14, 2009, ruling.

"Acting on the motion for reconsideration, the court resolved to deny with finality the said motion... as no substantial arguments were presented to warrant the reversal of the questioned resolution," the court said.

"No further pleadings or motions will be entertained. Let entry of judgment be made in due course," it added in an en banc resolution dated Jan. 11.

De Venecia had questioned the decision of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to approve the unification of the then ruling parties, arguing that such action was not sanctioned by the national assembly of Lakas party members.

The court, however, said De Venecia failed to prove that Comelec abused its discretion when it allowed the unification of the two political parties.

Last week, a group calling itself the United Union Party declared it broke away from the Lakas-Kampi and applied for registration as a political party. Led by Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia, the group is made up mostly of former Kampi members. — Marlon Ramos

Arab world's future may be decided in Cairo streets

From page A1

iary stood aside as they swore at, rocked with unease, sinky and hollow on Wednesday.

The mood was of watchful resignation that suggested it would serve for three years again – and stalled in one whether protest or crackdown would win the day.

New template for change

Words like uprising and revolution only hint at the scale of events in Egypt, which have already reverberated across Yemen, Jordan, Syria, Sudan and even Saudi Arabia, offering a new template for change to a region that long reeled from its own sense of stagnation.

"Every Egyptian understands now," said Magdi al-Sayed, one of the protesters.

The protesters have spoken for themselves in a potent internal flux, like many across the Middle East, mixed them as resistance.

For years, analysts have predicted that Islamists would be the force that toppled governments across the Arab world.

But so far, Islamists have been submerged in an outpouring of popular dissent that speaks to a variety of messages, however fleeting – itself a sea of change in the region's political landscape.

In the vast pavement area of Tahrir (Liberation) Square on Wednesday, Egyptians were stationed at makeshift barricades, helping put downside of the power of the dark street.

Internet generation

"The street is not afraid of government anymore," said Shawki al-Qadi, an opposition lawmaker in Yemen, itself roiled by change.

"It is the opposite. Government and their security forces are afraid of the people now. The new generation, the generation of the internet, is fearless. They want their full rights, and they want life, a dignified life," he added.

The power of Wednesday's crowd was that it turned those abstractions into reality.

The battle was waged by bloc-hammed Gamil, a dentist in a blue tie who ran toward the barricades of Liberation Square. It was joined by Sayed Hussein, a soft-spoken father of seven who fixed a Styrofoam container with cloth.

Magdi Abdel-Rahman, a 60-year-old grandfather, kissed the ground before throwing himself against crowds mobilized by a state bent on driving them from the square.

And the change was led by Tunisia, and Alexandria, Malaya said.

The Philippine Embassy in Cairo said there had been no reports of attacks on Filipinos but that it was on "red alert" and ready to proceed to Cairo should a sizable number of Filipinos also wish to move home, Malaya said.

Jerry E. Esplanada

Gov't to evacuate 26 Filipinos in Egypt on Saturday

THE PHILIPPINE government, assisted by the International Office of Migration, is evacuating on Saturday the first batch of 26 Filipinos from violence-swathed Egypt, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said yesterday.

The batch is composed of 12 women, five men and nine children, said DFA spokesperson Erlinda Malaya. Three of them are minors and the rest female household members and relatives.

More than 6,000 Filipinos are based in Egypt, mostly in Cairo and Alexandria.

Dignity was a word often used on Wednesday and its emphasis underlined the breadth of resentment that is, as he, fuels them.

Neither the Brotherhood nor a handful of opposition leaders – more like Mohamed ElBaradei's Kefaya Movement – have managed to capitalize. Impulsiveness, the humiliations of the police and the outrage at having tax funds money to get stunted, echoed in the streets of Palestinian camps in Jordan and to the urban misery of Baghdad's Sadr City.

For many, the Brotherhood it self is a vestige of an older order that has failed to deliver.

"The problem is that for 30 years, (President Hosni Mubarak didn't let us build an alternative," said Adel Wahba, who wandered the tumult in the square. "No alternative for anything."

Last option

The lack of an alternative may have led to the uprising, making the army the last option for not only the young and dispossessed but also virtually every element of Egypt's population – turbaned clerics, businessmen from wealthy suburbs, like directors and well-to-do engineers.

Mustafa Ajo, despair at the prospect of change in the Arab world was commonplace.

Protesters on Wednesday acted as though they were making a last stand or what they had won, in an uprising that is described particularly.

"He won't go," Mubarak's supporters chanted on the other side. "He will go," went the reply. "He's not going to go."

The word "traitor" rang out on Wednesday. The truth was dismissed at Mubarak, 82, and it refused the assistance heard in so many parts of the Arab world these days – governments of a 18-hundred order in most of the region have lost their legitimacy, built on the idea that people would surrender their rights for the prospect of security and stability.

In the square on Wednesday, protesters offered an alternative, their empowerment standing in possible the most remarkable legacy of a people who often lamented their apathy.

Ramy Raoof, a 26-year-old architect in the moment, fists, batons and rocks hanging any price of metal to aid, by themselves. A man stood on a tank turret, urging protesters forward. Another cried as he chanted to Mubarak's name. Reports from The New York Times, Steve Fainaru, AP and Reuters

Storm dumps snow over nearly half the US; 12 killed

From page A1

powdered, unmercifully raw for its size and ferocious strength.

"It storm that produces a swath of 50 centimeters more is really something we'll see once every 10 years, maybe," National Weather Service meteorologist Thomas Spriggs said.

Bitter cold

Across the storm's path, lonely automakers struggled against snow as over a dozen deep in some short areas, some of which had not seen a plow's blade since the snow started to fly earlier in Dallas and the giggles normal, by warned for the slopes because snowmobiles are getting to grab.

Although this storm is beginning to clear by mid-afternoon over much of the country's midsection, the storm promised to leave a blast of bitter cold in its wake.

Overnight temperatures in northern parts of the country were expected to fall to those minus 20 degrees Celsius, with wind chills dropping to about minus 30 degrees Celsius.

The 12 fatalities included a homeless man who burned to death on New York's Long Island as he tried to light cans of cooking fuel and a woman in Ohio burn fire who killed while being pulled behind a truck on a sled that fell against tail.

11,800 flights axed

Airport operations slowed to a crawl across the United States, and flight cancellations reached 11,800 for the week, making this storm the most disruptive so far this winter. A massive post. On-time Midwest led to about 11,000 cancellations.

In the winter-weary Northeast, there are around several measures to collapse, including a gas station canopy on Long Island and an airplane hangar near Boston. In at least two places, workers burst the aluminum beginning to crack and many only escaped.

More than a half dozen states began digging out from up to a foot of snow that made roads treacherous and left hundreds of thousands of homes without power.

Chicago public schools canceled classes for a second straight day and the city's mayor Lake Shore Drive remained shut down, nearly a day after drivers abandoned hundreds of snowbound vehicles.

The famous freeway appeared as if rush hour had been trapped in time, with three lanes of cars frozen side by side in each direction. Only a few motorists made it more than a few miles before they got stuck and had to abandon their vehicles.

Bulldozers worked to clear the snow from around the cars, which were then plucked out by tow trucks one by one.

Rolling blackouts

Some residents came away angry, frustrated that city didn't close the streets thoroughfares earlier. Others were mad at themselves for going out during the storm or not using another room.

Ned Roberts said initial assurances were that more than 150 houses were damaged in the three hardest-hit towns, including 66 in the beach-front community of Lindenhill.

Emergency services workers who used chain saws to cut their way through debris started to arrive on Thursday, though some residents had to wait hours where they had been deposited by relief teams, Rigli said.

It would take days to make a proper assessment of the damage, and localities would act quickly.

The storm's normal highway was a taken-course of downed trees and power lines, not needed by some of devastation – roads pulled back from houses, fields of sugar cane and banana shredded and flattened, huts lifted from their foundations and stripped of every leaf.

"It was really terrifying, but we were safe," said Barbara Kindell, who spent a sleepless night in a basement parking garage with her husband and their two sons after being evacuated from their coastal home at Kurrimine Beach.

"It's really hard to describe. All I could hear was the screaming of the wind," she added. AP

'Yasi' rips across Queensland; no death reported

TULLY, Australia—One of the most powerful storms ever recorded in Australia pulled houses apart and snapped power poles as it ripped across already flood-sodden Queensland state on Thursday, leaving millions more relieved that no one was killed.

The man the storm cyclone Yasi packed in has experienced, potentially for 1600 years and I think that due to very good planning, a very good response ... we've been able to keep people safe," said the Emergency Services Minister Neil Roberts.

Officials had issued days of increasingly dire warnings, and vast lines were spared because people followed instructions to flee to evacuation centers or bunker themselves at home in closets and cellars and rooms in the path of Cyclone "Yasi" on its northeast coast.

Thousands of people were left homeless.

The storm was as powerful as forecasters predicted—it remains packs up to 200 kilometers per hour at the core, flood-inducing rain and tidal surges that sent waves crashing ashore two blocks into seaside towns.

It wasn't as deadly as expected, though several small towns directly under Yasi's eye were devastated, hundreds of kilometers of dollars and banana and sugarcane crops smashed, and power to more than 180,000 homes severed.

Vesna Kolic huddled with her husband, daughter and two granddaughters in her sister's home in Tully after the storm roared overhead when the roof shaking began in earnest.

They fled to a small downstairs room and spent the night sitting in a tight cluster next to bags of pillows and listening to the walls, praying the house would hold up.

"It was eerie and whistling and whistling and popping and girls screaming," Kolic recalled on Thursday as she stood beside her sodden home.

Storm weakened

Yasi crossed the coast around midnight at the most destructive Category 5 rating, after the satellite weather system immediately began weakening once it was over land.

Still, the cyclone was strong enough to hold a Category 1 rating some 800 kilometers inland late Thursday where it was threatening to cause flooding in the Outback town of Mount Isa.

The disaster zone was north of Australia's recent flooding in Queensland state, the site of Grenmary and Fraser continued, and killed 35 people during weeks of high waters until last month.

But the storm added to the state's misery and was now in addition unbearably to the estimated $5.6 billion in damage since last November.

"We will meet the damages bill from the federal budget, it will require cutbacks to other areas, there is no point sugarcoating that," Prime Minister Julia Gillard said on Thursday in Canberra.

The government has already announced a special tax on investment to help pay for the earlier flooding.

2 towns hard hit

Queensland Premier Anna Bligh said several thousand people would be temporarily housed after the storm, and Red Cross Australia and local governments were working on registering people in need and finding places to house them, including strong volunteers.

Emergency Services Minister

In dark on Wednesday, more than 200 cars remained on the drive, and city workers planned to work through the night to remove them. But it wasn't clear whether the job would be done in time for the morning rush.

Elsewhere, utility crews raced to restore power to tens of thousands of homes and businesses in Ohio, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, where freezing rain and ice brought down electrical lines.

More than 1.2 million people remained without Texas, due to high demand during a run to storm.

In Canada, heavy snow canceled about a quarter of the 1,200 scheduled flights at Toronto's international airport, closed schools and caused dangerous driving conditions due to drifting snow.

La Niña

The storm derived its power from the millions of cold air sweeping down from Canada and across the Pacific ocean up from the south.

The monsoon were most dramatic in Yasi earlier in the week, when one part of the state experienced temperatures below freezing and another part had temperatures around 30 degrees Celsius, with near tropical humidity.

Lenin Doolan, director of the government's National Centre for Environmental Prediction, said the storms also drew strength from the La Niña condition—unusually cold cooling the tropical Pacific ocean.

La Niña is a periodic cooling of the surface temperatures of the tropical Pacific Ocean, the opposite of the better known El Niño warming.

Both can have significant impacts on weather around the world by changing the movement of winds and high and low pressure systems. AP

Janet Jackson: 'Go Deep' dedicated to Manila

From page A1

search after the date was announced by its promoter.

But middle promoter Aurora, she said, this one would be devoid of special efforts, featuring more on the songs in the music setting compared to its three-ripe venues.

The PICC plenary hall has an audience capacity of nearly 4,000.

Aurora, the youngest in the history of musicians led by the late "King of Pop" Michael Jackson, has picked Manila to kick off a 35-city concert tour across Asia and North America. She was set to arrive last night.

In 2008, Jamie did her first Scott's American tour in seven years. But after completing 16 dates, the remaining 12 days, including five in Japan, were canceled.

Promoters cited two reasons for the cancellations—"the 2009 economic crisis" and the artist contracting an illness described as "severe vertigo."

But Janet is enjoying renewed interest after a successful performance at an African-American music festival in Louisiana, New Orleans, last year.

This motivated her to visit both on a 35-city Asian and South American tour, dubbed "Number Ones: Up Close and Personal," to promote her recently released compilation album "Number Ones."

The kickoff date is at the PICC. Previous reports indicated that the tour would open in Hong Kong and Janet herself said she thought it would start in Singapore.

Fans rate

Apparently the Philippines rose through sheer aggressiveness of promoters and fans' demand.

On her official website, Janet asked her fans to vote on cities that the tour will visit. As a promotional gimmick, she promised to give one person from each city an autographed copy of the "Number Ones" CD.

She also planned to honor 25 people who have been active in their communities on the chosen from among the 35 cities in the tour), and to dedicate one of her hits to each city.

For Manila, she said it would be "Go Deep" from her 1997 album "The Velvet Rope."

Janet likewise chimed in a video posted on her website that this would be the "the largest tour" she's ever done.

Critical praise

Born in Gary, Indiana, and raised in Encino, California, Janet was only 7 years old when she first performed on stage with her siblings. She officially debuted as an actress in the television series "The Jacksons" in 1976.

Although criticized for her limited vocal range, Janet gained critical praise starting with her third studio album, 1986's "Control," which talked on the issues of sexuality and featured hits by Janet and Terry Lewis, and was further enhanced by the snappy choreography in the songs' music videos that capitalized on the rising popularity of MTV.

The significance of the album's success to Janet's burgeoning public persona of her father, Joe Jackson, as her manager, and her ongoing a sense of independence which was expressed in On hit song "What Have You Done for Me Lately."

"Control" became the first album to top the Billboard 200 chart, it yielded four other hit singles: "Nasty," "When I Think of You," "Let's Wait Awhile" and the title track. It has sold more than 14 million copies worldwide.

Social issues

Her next album, "Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation 1814," established her as a serious artist with a proper social issues.

The title, released during the record saw Janet shifting from "personal freedom to socio-universal concerns—injustice, illness, crime and drugs—with out-missing a beat."

Like its predecessor, the album's second single, "Miss You Much," reached the Billboard 200 chart and sold some 14 million copies. Rolling Stone magazine ranked it 277th on its list of the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time.

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In 1993, Janet became the highest-paid female recording artist in contemporary music after signing an exclusive contract with Virgin Records, personally negotiated by label owner Richard Branson and said to be valued between $11 million and $90 million.

'Wardrobe malfunction'

Two years later, she caused another stir when during halftime just her on the stage half-time show at the Super Bowl XXXVIII by the hands of her then-husband, Justin Timberlake during the Super Bowl XXXVIII American football halftime show in Houston, Texas, which was later described as a "wardrobe malfunction."

For the rest of the 1990s and until 2008, she released six more albums, some of which debuted at No. 1 on Billboard but failed to match up to the achievements of "Control" and "Rhythm Nation."

The Filipino public's latest glimpse of Janet was during Michael's funeral in 2009.

DFA scored for not knowing of uranium smuggling report

By Jerry E. Esplanada

MILITANT groups yesterday assailed the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) for "playing dumb, if not being clueless dumb," for downplaying off a supposed 2007 memo from the United States Embassy to conduct about an alleged smuggling incident involving uranium that took place in the Philippines.

The Nov. 21, 2007, memo, addressed to the US Department of State, was released by Philippine Star online columnist Wikileaks. Uranium is a radioactive material used in the production of nuclear power.

League of Filipino Students national chair Terry Ridon said that "for the DFA to shrug off the issue is a clear dereliction of its duty."

He pointed out that "the leaked report is a verified and classified material. Definitely it has close basis."

"If the transit and smuggling of nuclear materials are true, it should be stopped immediately as it constitutes a serious threat to our national security and violates the nuclear ban provisions of the Constitution," Ridon said.

Both party-list Rep. Raymond Palatino and the SFR "should have raised the issue with the US and demanded a clarification from them."

DFA Assistant Secretary and spokesperson J. Schnelle Mulaya the other day said that "generally, we do not wish to comment on the contents of another government's internal communications."

"The information in this particular memo is also an issue and unverified," Mulaya told the Inquirer.

Earlier, he said "the best-case scenario is that there would be nothing in there that we do not know about, as of the moment."

Renato Reyes Jr., secretary general of Bayan (Bayanang Makabayan Liberal), said the DFA "may only be trying to explain their ignorance of the supposed leaked cable."

"By ignorance, I mean if the DFA weren't made to know anything of the incident, or that they were left in the dark by the US. National interest is at stake when nuclear materials are allegedly found in Philippine territory," Reyes said.

Without referring to the cable on alleged uranium smuggling in the country, the US Embassy in Manila yesterday warned against what it called a "series of scams" circulating in the Philippines.

In a statement, embassy deputy spokesperson Shaunprithik Mauregta said that "in repeated instances over the past few years, fraudsters claim to have recovered metals, including uranium, gold or plutonium, from sunken ships or downed aircraft.

"Often, the raw metals are reportedly encased in a steel box or take the shape of bars engraved with markings implying they are uranium or other precious metals."

An online-based member of persons have also "claimed to have found US treasury bonds dating to the pre-World War II era, and looked others into buying them at a discounted price."

"These buyers then attempt to redeem the bonds at the US embassy only to learn they are counterfeit," Mauregta said.

"The embassy has investigated the merits of these claims which have been brought to our attention and in no instance have they been true," she said.

In the leaked cable, then US ambassador to the United Kingdom Robert Tuttle questioned an unidentified source in saying the uranium "has nearly belonged to the IJI."

Usec asked to inhibit self from DOJ Stradcom probe

By Marlon Ramos

ONE OF THE contending parties claiming ownership over Stradcom Corp. has asked Justice Undersecretary Francisco Baraan III to inhibit himself from the Department of Justice (DOJ) panel looking into the Dec. 9, 2010, takeover attempt of the information technology firm's office.

In a letter dated Jan. 31, Rosalinda Sembilla said Baraan showed bias in his handling of the investigating panel when Justice Secretary Leila de Lima created to look into allegations that some Land Transportation Office (LTO) officials tried to meddle in the intercorporate dispute of the IT firm.

Sembilla, who claimed to be the lawful president and chief executive officer of Stradcom, said the letter-order left "serious doubt and bias" in the hearing have come as a complete shock to me and to those who signed the statement to protect with own hands."

He said Baraan's panel had "become a brutally forum" for Gene Quiambao's faction, which he described as the group which "stands to be exposed for their lack of any valid claim to him controlling stocks in Stradcom."

Quiambao's group narrowly refused newspaper advertisements claiming the Sembilla faction was no longer connected with Stradcom, which has a multibillion-peso IT contract with the DOJ.

"I made myself available to the commissioner... despite earlier advice not to do so from well-meaning friends who know about your personal experience in the province of Pangasinan," Sembilla said in his letter.

"But the three hearings already conducted by you alone, not by the committee... could very well negate my efforts to arrive at a legal, fair and peaceful resolution of the intra-corporate controversy within Stradcom," he added.

He also assailed Baraan for allegedly portraying him to the media as an "usurper, intruder or hoax."

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Obstruction

EDITORIAL

ANOTHER DAY, another bloodhunter inquiry in aid of legislation. Coming on the heels of the first hearing conducted by the House justice committee, the Senate blue ribbon committee yesterday conducted its second hearing into the controversial plea bargain agreement that Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez entered into with former AFP comptroller Carlos F. Garcia. Many new disclosures were made, with perhaps the most dramatic development being that involving the appearance of a new witness, Col. Antonio Lim, an officer in active military service who served as an assistant to whistle-blower George Rabusa when he was budget officer under Garcia.

Under the presiding of Senators Franklin Drilon and Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Gutierrez accepted the committee's suggestion that her office file a manifestation with the Sandiganbayan requesting the court to hold its deliberations on the plea bargain, while the ombudsman and her prosecutors review the new evidence provided by Rabusa et al. But this seemingly positive development in the case yesterday quickly crashed into the wall of legal reality.

The reality is, the plunder case against Garcia has been turned, perhaps irreparably by the accusations of the ombudsman and her prosecutors. The legal discussion about the status of Garcia's legal position, which occupied the attention of the Senate in the first few hours of the hearing, is proof of this self-inflicted injury, and only deepens our conviction about the ombudsman's decision to accept Garcia's offer of a plea bargain in the first place.

The basic facts are confounding. According to the Sandiganbayan itself, the plea bargain remains pending. That is to say, the anti-graft court has not yet ruled either way, whether to approve it or to disapprove it. But according to several lawyer-senators, the fact that Garcia was granted bail can only mean that the plea bargain had already been given due course.

It may be that the Sandiganbayan has already ruled on the plea bargain, but retreated behind the facade of continuing deliberations after public opinion against the arrangement came crashing down the justices' heads.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile was the first to point out that the fact that Garcia had already pleaded guilty to the lesser offense may have effectively bound the Office of the Ombudsman from pursuing the plunder case. Later in the hearing, Special Prosecutor Wendell Sulit admitted as much, saying she and other prosecutors were now uncertain about the next step, now that even a late manifestation from their office may not be enough to save the plunder case.

In other words, despite the new evidence and eyewitness testimony of Rabusa and Lim, despite the evidence gathered by ex-auditor Heidi Mendoza, it may be too late to restore the plunder case. Even if the Sandiganbayan were to rule with finality against the plea bargain agreement, Garcia can invoke the very legal arguments he heard first-hand at the Senate yesterday to protect himself against any possible double jeopardy. (Indeed, Garcia tried to use Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile's legal argument about self-incrimination, raised in the committee's first hearing, as an additional justification for his continuing silence.)

Let's think about that. The fact (presented by Drilon) that Garcia and his immediate family withdrew some P126 million from their numerous bank accounts in 2004, soon after the controversy started, has no longer any real legal consequence, because of the plea bargain. Asked whether the special prosecutors had pressed Garcia on where the P126 million went, and (more important) where it came from, they could only offer a lame reply: Garcia refused to say they said.

It is this lack of prosecutorial ardor, this absence of a passion for the true public interest, that damns the ombudsman and her prosecutors. The government had a record of those sudden withdrawals—and in spite of the fact that Garcia refused to account for the money (the magnitude of which was already prima facie evidence of ill-gotten wealth), the ombudsman, nevertheless, decided to accept his offer of a plea bargain.

We hope that the continuing revelations from the legislative inquiries will reform the Office of the Ombudsman—and help spur both chambers of Congress to hold the present ombudsman to the strictest account. The Garcia plea bargain cannot any longer be considered an unfortunate dereliction of duty, but the outright obstruction of justice.

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Impose total log ban now

AS I SEE IT

Ninez M. Cruz

IT'S HIGH the ranges of global warming are upon us, bringing crazy weather patterns. Severe winter storms are buffeting temperate countries such as Europe and the United States, leaving hundreds with too much rain, such as Sri Lanka and the northern coast of Australia, the island-continent that is three-fourths desert.

In the Philippines, areas that were not flood-prone before are now being flooded. The Visayas and Mindanao are right now being drenched with heavy rains. Pagasa said we will have a very wet summer and that more and stronger typhoons will visit since the country during the year. The Philippines is in the midst of a "climate-related changing disaster," Pagasa assured.

With the rains come the floods and landslides, and there are occurring in other areas that are no longer big news. Among the causes are the land encroachments. Think homes on the mountainsides were able to soak up the heavy rains before. Now, with the mountainsides bare, the waters rush down to the plains below and take with them soil and mud mixed with boulders that bury whole villages in their paths.

President Aquino has said he is planning a total log ban, but until now he has not delivered that up. Meanwhile, time is running out.

Enthusiasts of wood, such as the makers of furniture and woodcraft, have voiced their opposition to a total log ban. That is to be expected. But the safety and well-being of millions of Filipinos take precedence over the livelihood of woodcarvers.

Wood users can go into eco-farming. There are farmers who have grown their own trees, between, they can import what they need.

The construction industry is also expected to produce a total log ban. The construction industry is the biggest user of wood. The end-part is that many of the construction projects that use wood do not become part of a house. They are used as scaffolding and form timber and end up as firewood after they have a finished.

This is very wasteful of a rapidly depleting natural resource. Modern contractors now use steel as scaffolding. There can be used again and again. And more parts of houses and buildings are no longer wood but steel, concrete and recycled plastic. In the United States, houses are made mostly of plastic. The walls look like wood, with grains and all, or like bricks, stones, and other building materials. But they are all made of plastic or nylon. Bathrooms come in molded plastic. Tube bowls, sinks, bathtubs, shower stalls come together in one package, ready for installation.

The leakage of synthetic materials is that they are water-proof, termite-proof, and don't rot and decay like wood. They are also easier and faster to install and teach fighters their existence and wood. One conservation industry should start by applying this.

Stopping logging does not mean stopping only the big-scale loggers with the logging concessions. The biggest destroyers of forests are the illegal loggers, the so-called "timber-hoggers." They enter forests and cut trees indiscriminately. They are the ones who lumber down land them to the lowlands by carabao. Others roll the logs down steep mountainsides to rivers and float them to where they can be hauled over land. Still others burn the logs on the mountainsides and leave the heavy logs and floods to wash them down to the rivers. This is why after a big flood, many rivers are choked with floating logs.

But a big destroyer of forests where we have control is the charcoal industry. There are many, even small ones, left by the loggers and burn their into charcoal. Charcoal-makers are decimating the trees in the Machiko Watershed Reservation. They have invaded the reforested area planted with Benguet pines in the Tanay area by the Rotary Club Foundation.

Watersheds are like termite-eaten wood. The loggers and charcoal makers do not care the trees surrounding a forest. They cut the trees deep inside. So that the outside, the forests look undisturbed. Inside, however, there are no more trees, as if giant termites have ravished them.

On into the watershed of Angat Dam or the watersheds of the other dams. You will find the very upwards of the headwaters of the rainless loggers and charcoal-makers.

But where will the thousands of sidewalk hardware stalls, home improvements, and home-owner-made get their charcoal? From the farms such as coconut coir and shells, palay husks, hay, sugarcane trash, wood chips, leaves, sugar, and salabat grass—any organic thing can be compressed into charcoal.

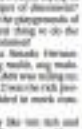
What do we do with the palay husks after milling? They are burned or roadsides. What do we do with the rice stalks left standing after a harvest. They are burned. Sugarcane fields are first burned before harvesting the cane. Coconut and nairds outside are routinely burned every summer. Millions of tons of economic fuels are left under the coconut groves after the ripe fruit have been gathered. Leaves are swept up and burned in backyards—with fire.

These are all a waste of energy and economic or global warming. Carbon dioxide produced by burning rises to the ozone layer. Fine traps sunlight that warms the globe and makes the air darker. The method must raise the ozone levels and submerges low-lying islands and coastal areas. In time, the Philippines will no longer be a country of 7,000 islands. Many of the islands would disappear. So would the beach resorts in the bigger islands, including Boracay.

Even the agricultural wastes don't have to be burned. They can be turned into charcoal. That would provide the clean-burning manufactured coal but at the same time save our remaining forests and the villages below rivers. The technology already exists to do that.

Why the fuss over symbolic issues?

PASSION FOR REASON



Raul C. Pangalangan

BENIGNO AQUINO has the presidential purchase of a pre-owned Porsche provoked many Quiapo's outrage? Lotsamis's nontax cards as high-tax candidate as bravely as the scandalous attack during Gloria's presidency? Why are we barely this issue should be dwarfed by the colossal scale of the graveside "punishering" and "pahuso." But we shouldn't be surprised.

It has all to do with the power of symbols: a President who drives a Porsche is an entitled or a mistrusted. Edsa Revolution still had him self-nominable likeness as the level of symbols.

To start with, the Porsche debate is fueled by the public's own confused expectations of its leaders. We assume that Presidents Aquino's opinion embodies the Pinoy Everyman. We're not. We all know that. So can actually afford a Porsche using his personal unearned wealth. His brother-in-law can afford to lease him a Lexus. There's no big deal others be comes from. And because we've had retired soldier-presidents before, we somehow forget that he actually comes from the elite and that he belongs to old names on both sides of the family tree.

This confusion is not limited to our perception of Pnoy. The same thing goes with Joseph Estrada. We forget that the guy who was pinned on the image of Jesus in Iloilo himself actually owns mansion in Sunny Hills, comes from distinguished stock, and resides in this house in Greenhills, away from the reach of the hovels that his millions of supporters call home.

But the confusion doesn't end there. It doesn't stop with an confusing their public cause with their private lifestyles. The Filipino public is confused over almost any presidential notion of their private life. Remember the then papers that Monday in January 2001 after the Edsa 2 uprising? They showed the newly installed president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, arranging a golf drive on the posh Tagaytay Highlands. Just taking her shot. On Saturday, she took her oath of office amid a massive uprising in the Edsa Shrine that supposedly enabled all Filipinos, rich and poor alike. The next day, the three were in a Tagaytay enclave where, upon entering the gate, it's like you are instantly beamed to a different country altogether. Did we have a coup of power or even just a whimper of discontent? No, we saw a lot like golfing in the playgrounds of the rich during the most pressing thing to do the morning after winning a revolution!

Whatever could about Ka Susada Dimasalang's classic, "Sa Hirogan ng Sasha, ang mahal ng mga Hirogan"? If Lord Cobb was telling us, if Pnoy has forgotten his roots, Tagaytay is people's getaway. And we all modeled in movie escapades.

In other words, we really like our rich and classy ones don't you think? That was the dilemma of the retirement of Petronilo Daroy Garcia who, we cannot himself in his predecessor Richard Nixon (with a brief interval under Gerald Ford), took to working in his inaugural and carrying his own bags to board Air Force One. Appreciate the public wasn't really impressed. They simply don't like their leaders pretentious, indeed imperial. And apparently so do we.

I have personally witnessed Jaime Ongpin's spirit raise before, when we were both speakers at a journalism's retreat in Tagaytay late last year. Ongpin noted that the president that evening did not play the role of a spiritual medium in his script: attack a shrub with her audience. Her term Bin Laden ship about the presidential Porsche should send an alarm. This time the criticism came from within Pnoy's own camp. But as long as our leadership were refusing from common questions, they were suspect, the typical issue made by the elected commoners and taxpayers (Insulators, as we label them in Filipino English).

In the sense, Aquino's latest are given voice to a different kind of constituency, one that is made up by consumers in a country where rich and judges their leaders' private lives by the same standards as their public lives. Arroyo can explain away her expensive dinners abroad by stating that it was paid for by other people who's her friends (which, supposedly in solid cash). But Arroyo is not Pnoy.

Cobb had by their forerunners are promises to being Edsa's heroines, while Pnoy can and won on the intention of the Edsa legacy. That is what makes the Porsche debate linked: it renders the president's Edsa Pnoy bold his campaign.

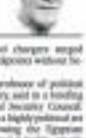
The best antidote is to push forward the anti-campaign contenders and remedies by those in power. Providentially the newspaper headlines provide me the perfect opportunity to do exactly that. Exposés of the pathetic system in the military. The plea bargain of former AFP comptroller Carlos Garcia. The judicial confessions of Sen. Ronald Dragon about regular contractors and the arraignment of his fellow "businessmen" to expel him from their chamber.

Pnoy's critics have branded the anti-corruption campaign as backward looking and irrepetitive. Remember that was exactly what Cory's critics said of her campaign to vet after the Marcos regime? It proved wrong. And today, campaign is looking like that same arguments is getting a second wind today under Pnoy. That would be most unfortunate.

If, like Cory then, P-Noy buys the arguments and mantra on Gloria-era anomalies, then he would have accomplished to a double advantage. In the spirit of the Porsche debate, he would have compromised on the Edsa legacy at the level of both symbol and substance. I can imagine the President's consultants over an unofficial interview question about cars, like he who was in the middle of the Edsa 2 uprising, and summarize the emotions of the fact and periodically nose into the people's mind.

On whose side is the Egyptian army?

ANALYSIS



Amando Doronila

THE BLOODY clashes in Cairo on Wednesday between protesters and supporters of embattled President Hosni Mubarak while soldiers watched with seeming indifference raised questions over whether the army is supporting the popular uprising against Mubarak's 30-year ruling hold.

All eyes are on the behavior of the Egyptian army, widely regarded as the key to the survival of the 30-year Mubarak dictatorship, which has come under siege from violent demonstrations for the past nine days. Doubts over the army's neutrality in its first round-off between the government and the protesters were intensified by the seven clashes in Cairo's Tahrir (Liberation) Square, which left four people injured.

The fighting took a critical turn Wednesday when truckloads of thugs were let loose in the square to attack a group of anti-Mubarak protesters. The charge into the protesters was led by mounted gangs in horseback and camels.

The assault was the latest and potentially fatal attempt by Egypt's regime to crush the uprising against the rule of popular demand for Mubarak to step down. The charge was the first sign of a counter-demonstration after days of mass anti-government protests, according to media reports. State reports said thousands of supporters and opponents of Mubarak converged on Tahrir Square, throwing bottles and firebombs on each other in scenes of unconcealed violence as soldiers stood by without intervening.

The two sides pummeled each other with rocks and bottles and battled on each of the six entrances to the plaza where 10,000 anti-Mubarak protesters tried to fend off the more than 3,000 attackers who besieged the square. Some people on the pro-government side wielded machetes. The protesters accused the regime of "unleashing a form of party thugs and plainclothes police on the anti-government demanding Mubarak's ouster." The protesters showed off police ID badges they had wrested off their attackers. The brutality of the attack came under doubt in view of reports that the mounted charges surged through army and police checkpoints without being impeded.

Joshua Stacher, assistant professor of political science at Kent State University, said in a briefing at the White House National Security Council, "The military's refusal to act in a highly political way clearly shows that it is choosing the Egyptian regime to reconstruct itself and it highly, overly against the protesters."

The absence of military action serves two purposes, Stacher said: "One, is to make the protesters go home, and two, start the preparations for the reinvention. They want the Egyptian people to submit to the police state, they want the people to pine for their police state, so that they have stability back."

The bloody clashes drew a sharp rebuke from the White House, which has been marching an orderly transition of power after Mubarak announced he would not seek re-election in September. This announcement provoked further anger from the protests nationwide which is demanding the immediate departure of Mubarak, who assigned the Prime Minister to name Mubarak "If any of the reforms is instigated by the government it should stop immediately," Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said in a press briefing. "The President [Barack Obama] found the images outrageous and deplorable."

Gibbs said no decision had been made on cutting off the $1.3 billion in annual aid the U.S. provides Egypt. He reiterated Obama's call that the transition must begin now. "How drastic now," Gibbs said, "the people of Egypt need to see change, the people of Egypt need to see progress."

Mubarak has been an important ally of the US during his 30-year rule, ensuring passage through the Suez Canal and maintaining peace with Israel. But the Egyptian people have another perspective under Mubarak they have been living in poverty, repression and corruption. The US have cast the removal of Mubarak might lead to the political ascendancy of an Islamic fundamentalist group that would overturn Egypt's peace treaty with Israel.

The protests put on Mubarak by Obama to begin the orderly transition immediately appears to have been unheeded. In fact, the attack against the protesters on Liberation Square came after the end of Obama's remarks. It was a harsh rise response to break the round-off.

Mubarak has ignored demands that he have Egypt. Like President Ben Ali of Tunisia who fled to Saudi Arabia last month after he was toppled by a people's power revolution.

Mubarak is made of tougher stuff, he said, "This is my country ... and I will die on its soil."

But the tension is still to come. The question is, will the army stand by him when the protest movement gathers more momentum, or loyalties between soldiers and officers change?

The army has been ambivalent and ambiguous in its actions since military tanks moved in across Egypt on Jan. 28, when the demonstrations started. It refused to fire on demonstrators after they had been fired on by police officers of the government to disband the demonstrations.

After the bloody battles last Wednesday the army spokesman called for the protesters to stand down now that "your message has arrived." He was apparently referring to the fact that the army did not intervene to prevent the protesters from the attack of Mubarak loyalists. But what will the army do if Mubarak loses the capacity to govern. Will the generals take power themselves and form a caretaker government to end the turmoil?

'Bait,' 'suwapang'

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tee

RUTH FROST and broadcast media picked up a particular argument of the Senate blue ribbon committee hearings on the Carlos Garcia case. After Lt. Col. George Rabusa, a former budget officer of the AFP had accused Reyes of receiving "no less than P50 million" as payback (and still counting), Reyes asked Rabusa, if he (Reyes) had ever been "gusot" or "suwapang" (syntax and spelling as I got back to shorthy).

Doy, Jinggoy Estrada quickly answered that he is not here was on- signed and indeed, A second read, Reyes' question was ambivalent, until about one-th comb it. (A quick note for some of my more

perceptive readers: I'm using the suggested standardized spelling for Filipinos. The word "suwapang" or "suwang" word is not entirely perceptive.)

I'm viewing on these two terms because they speak, rather, of a certain mindset. Bait and gusot are like hedges into why corruption is so pervasive in the country.

The two words are somewhat difficult to translate into English. Jose Villa Panganiban defines "gusot" in its slang terms: "frustrate" and "frontal," maneuvering extremely bad behavior. "Suwapang" is not in Panganiban's dictionary because it is a Tagalog word. Panganiban's dictionary was published, it was still mainly a slang term. Since then, it has become widely used and means "selfish" or "greedy," again from a tradition.

Rosario apparently translated, as I did, why Reyes had to ask Rabusa if he was "suwapang" was because he wanted to be the accusation that he got P50 million. But in retrospect, the question was not just whether but also everything.

On one hand, it could have been Reyes' way of asking Rabusa, "Why are you doing this to me? I have I ever done you such grievous wrong (as to "gusot") to deserve this treatment?"

But the word "suwapang" was more complex, almost self-incriminating. As I mentioned earlier, "greedy" and "selfish" are only basic translations of "suwapang." To understand the word, we have to look at the profanity placed on their using its root meaning, as well explained by the translation, "Kaya mayo," making even the strongest to do their best.

We learn that value of sharing early in life, so in school a kid who refuses to share his packed lunch or baon would elicit accusations like "Kuripang mo." The same phrase is hurled at kids who won't share toys, a new pencil, or even answers in class.

Slowly

In the context of school children, "suwapang" will in accusations of being selfish and miserly. Expand the notion over beyond a packed lunch as something like the large palaces maintained by Rabusa. Reyes should have been more selfish and miserly by wanting only for half his money, using as son, people could wonder if it means having been "selfish" in terms of hogging the palaces.

Some years ago, over a meal, I asked some Indonesian friends, an university professors, why their president Suharto (Sukarno based on long CIS years, compared to 21 for President Marcos) was so much more popular. I asked myself, "Sukarno shared the loot." The other politicians participated in the discussion, explaining has there was indeed massive corruption, but the corrupt always made sure to divide up the spoils, after pocketing a large chunk. The ordinary people could see that the corrupt were "sharing" with them (selfish—and loyal, or their corrupt bosses. Rabusa "suwapang" in the Senate hearings brought back memories of my Indonesian colleagues' analysis of Suharto on corruption.

Three days after that hearing, Brian Ferish Mendoza called about how she had interpreted anecdotes in the Senate hearings of the Philippines when she was with the Commission on Audit and how she had been told to go there. She eventually left the government service but courageously agreed to testify in the case. At one point Mendoza mentioned that she was "pressured" by her superiors to "go with the Philippines, referring to the issues when are chance silence and inaction even when no longer corruption is taking place in our offices.

Direct, especially in relation to the auditors, auditors will not be able to perform their duties unless they have the wholehearted protection of the organization's heads, that is enforced. But corruption may only be part of the picture. More significant would have been the shaking of the base. In auditors perverse but there's supposed to be honest even among thieves.

Due to cultural context be hidden and say that in many cases, the subordinates do not actually ask for their cut, and that it is the cunning corrupt official who finds ways to share his "blessings," like throwing a big party with funny tuffled gifts or declaring a salary bonus. I always become suspicious when every time I see employees around the hospitals—but the nurses, or other parts, are coming from a certain individual, under whose the organization.

We certainly saw that in the last administration with the many huge "gifts" that would be given out in times of crisis. I'm not referring to "Ondoy" and other natural disasters, but to other times when the government was in danger of losing reputation.

Kindness

Back to whether Alexis' praise: "Ang loti si Jesa." "Mabait" mainly means "kind" but will have nuanced different. Kindness is meaningless, depending on the context. In the case of shared corruption, mabait is the opposite of suwapang.

Unlike long loyalty to the corrupt leader comes about, at least while the person is in power. After that power fades through, the corrupt can only hope that memories will fade out, and even forgiveness will come in due course.

In other cases, as "honorable" silence is maintained because by accepting their share of the loot, subordinates in the corrupt official are now in effect accomplices, and have to keep quiet.

But if it is still another scenario, the silence is kept because subordinates "honorably" believe corruption is unavoidable, and will even recall, with genuine affection, how the leader lived was a good man, good because he "not suwapang."

Even more horrifying (and I've seen this happen) is when subordinates may try to cover up, or make up, for the corruption. I never forget the way one such subordinate explained it to me in Filipino, "No matter what, he was my boss, and I will ever him my loyalty." Mind you, this subordinate, as he or I know, had not benefited from any kind of corruption of his former boss, but was there on principle. But this principle is not the same as "honesty" that is enshrined in the sense, I guess, of being neither gusot nor suwapang.

There's been talk that the Senate hearings will cause unrest among our soldiers, as they hear of corruption among their bosses while they risk life and limb with low salaries, old uniforms and outdated field equipment. But I wonder.

There is no sense of outrage in the gossip circles, as it dwells endlessly on the "details" revealing only as please the ones ... and therefore easy to find.

Email: mtee@inquirer.com.ph

Keep paying attention

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE BOOED and Senate hearings on the plea bargain agreement between the government and former AFP comptroller Carlos Garcia, and the probe on unaccounted millions now amounts than a engendered, contains make for great—if at times tedious—entertainment. Granted, there's nothing like the live coverage of senators and congressmen grilling generals, cabinets, former government officials, their relatives and her friends's sons and sons, number of officials on lines up a deep afternoon.

At times, the proceedings take on the nature of a tv soap, especially when Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, with her keen wit and relatable images, gets into the act, comparing the whole scandal to a game with facility cards. Or when Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, no stranger to scene films, threatens a detainee Lauvia that he, the senator, "is about to lose my temper!"

There are also instant memes on comics and lore, especially since Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, from the heights of his standing as the Senate president and a senior citizen with heirloom medicines of the Philippine government's operations since martial law, manages to explain a commonsense legal point or two in the "history" of senate practices in the millions.

It would all be very enlightening and amusing if the hearings were supposed to be as long as political battles drama. But we all know the hearings, already in its second week, are no more than an exercise in futility. And this is where the trouble lies. When the last witness has testified, after the legislators setting the last wistful revelations and personal confessions from those they have summoned, and when the last camera has been turned off, and the show applies, everyone will have made up his or her mind on the issue and cannot to a position on the innocence or guilt of those under scrutiny.

* * *

THIS is a problem, because in reality nothing would really have been resolved.

Hearings in the House and Senate are not court trials. At the end of the proceedings, the committees concerned will result out a report and a list of recommended actions, which will be submitted to the President and to the agency concerned, in this case the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It's really all up to the agency it based on the recommendations. It will initiate legal or administrative proceedings, or it may not. Or the President can will determine whether the report is acted upon or ignored, and if the latter, then hundred(s) of trees would have been killed and turned to paper for nothing.

In the case of Garcia, recall that congressional hearings were held on the charges of graft and plunder filed by the Office of the Ombudsman after his sons and wife were arrested by US Customs agents for operating in illegal monetary transactions. But after the hearings were done, there is not for acquittal—many natural upon his release on bail, Garcia would perhaps have found himself in the Senate of his family in their family Mambukan condominium, enjoying the untold millions left over from the money he offered to surrender to the government.

* * *

IMPORTANTLY, in the public mind, once hearings in the House and Senate are concluded, the matter is considered closed. Indeed, as many of the accused have pointed out, they had already undergone "trial by publicity," and many people had already made up their minds about the guilt or innocence of the people under scrutiny.

What is really necessary is the subsequent follow-up by the officials of the agencies implicated, as well as the legislators involved to enforce the defense or decriminalize of the law.

By this time, though, public attention would have waned or wandered elsewhere, most probably to the next morbidly controversy or crime of which unfortunately we can't seem to run out. And when the attention of the people is most needed to make sure events reach their logical and just end, the modern barkadas dissipate again. Unless, in the wake of another scandal like the hopefully aborted plea bargain, we are jolted once more into awareness and resentment that nothing had really been resolved. Then we find ourselves seated before our TV sets and tapping up the show hosted by our legislators.

* * *

WHETHER journalists, most notably CNN bearerheld Anderson Cooper, have come under assault by pro-Mubarak demonstrators in Egypt, the issue is not whether the attack is justified. Journalists in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia or Yemen? Journalists says the mob action is the Mubarak government's attempt to curtail the international media's coverage of the upheaval in Egypt, and to force them to use a government-friendly line.

Before this, the Mubarak regime had attempted to interrupt the sharing of views, opinions and even calls for demonstrations by forcing private ISPs and social networking sites to shut down. Without the internet in Egypt, it was said, this, I wonder if these hackings would undermine to operate in Egypt, given that majority of transactions done days depend on communications, a lot of it on the internet. How could funds be transferred to and from abroad without the supporting communications?

Funny how wonderful if a similar move in Omani People Power could work here. This would do well to remember that the Internet came into being precisely because scientists and researchers in the US were concerned about the risks of worldwide calamity, like say a nuclear war, had society set up the Internet, meant to bypass conventional means of communications and connecting first, scientists, then educators, then business and eventually the world at large, as multi-user and facilitator "sharing" of pictures and videos, information, opinion, and so much else. I don't think Mubarak can silence the voices of protest and yearnings for democracy for too long.

Common virtue

COMMENTARY

Roberto E. N. Rivera, S.J.
John J. Carrabbacus on Church and Establishment

At the onset, Heidi and Hey seemed like an unlikely pair. Heidi followed a fairly unremarkable path, working in the Commission on Audit most of her professional career. Hey, on the other hand, was a man of more than 20 years of service in government. Hey on the side is famed and a man standalone years, going full-time into modern activism before assuming his cabinet position. He married Heidi just as he began activism in the mid-1980s, and Heidi soon became a veteran of Asian participation the Center for Community Services, the Lopezian-era Ignacio Center and UP-CIDE.

When Hey decided to settle down to coach training at the Ateneo de Manila University (eventually obtaining a PhD in history from the University of the Philippines), it was Heidi's turn to enter into diverse involvements in public concerns. Because of her long years of experience in the CSOs, she became affiliated with the "Davos" anti-corruption initiative of the Philippine Judges, working closely with Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ, on various anti-corruption and advocacy campaigns. It was inevitable for a series

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Mendoza against all odds

PERMANENT OF the spirit of John L Devil-Mendoza, a government student, showed the world that his unswerving Honor and devotion to duty alone will when she stood firm against the forces of evil and dominated before finally the military conspiracy under the Arroyo administration.

Carlos P. Garcia, a retired general and former comptroller of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, was ensnarled found by Mendoza to have stolen P600 million from government coffers, but high government officials, including "somebody from the Palace," intervened "to pardon on General Garcia." Lesser records would have compromised the safety of valley and security, but not Mendoza, alone and unafraid, she raised her ground and went public instead.

Me, the countless of the Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP), which has fought hard are still fighting tooth and nail against corruption in the country's pension system are proud of Mr. Mendoza, and we salute her for her bravery and true-blue patriotism in the face of overwhelming odds. If there were more Filipinos like her, the country would be less corrupt, and the peoplehood nothing (poor) as President against destroyed.

LETTERS

As an accountant/auditor, I commend Mendoza's every achievement of the principles which accountants are mandated to live by, under some people in the profession who wantonly ignore the code of principles whenever they find it convenient to do so.

—ARQUICO CASADO,
founding chair and past president,
Philippine Association of Retired Persons
(PARP), amacabenier@yahoo.com

Self-serving objection to Brillantes appointment

SEN. ALLIANCE Cayetano deserves questions the competence of lawyer Lorie Brillantes, one of the brilliant and top-criminal lawyers in the country and a Bar topnotcher (No. 7, 1966 Bar Examination), as Comelec chair. His protest is solely based on Brillantes' long record as a practicing election lawyer and lawyer for of politicians in dispute to win-so but he beleaguer or suicide inclined to give favors.

With due respect, Cayetano's logic is clearly flawed. If we adhere to his reasoning, no public prosecutor, judge or lawyer would hardly be qualified or deserve appointment to their positions simply because one of the legal requirements or qualifications for those appointments chosen is that they should have been in the practice of law for a certain number of years (e.g., five years for public prosecutor and for trial judges; fifteen years for appointed lawyers; fifteen years for CTA; 15 years for Court of Appeals and Supreme Court justices). More often than not, the practice of law is adversarial field, be a lawyer, prosecutor, etc. labor, involved and passionate, election, etc. Cayetano's reasoning would succeed the dictum. If Cayetano stirring above public prosecutors, judges and justices should not have been appointed to their respective positions because they have once been engaged in the practice of law before, duly be beholden to us...on grounds to be influenced by us or great favors to—dear former favor!

If the incumbents have become accustomed to claims: Will she but also desperately shun from being appointed, say, to Chairperson's seat to the Election Records?

Lawyers who have entered into practice as counsels, e.g., Jose Ong, Lesaterony Gaite, Jojo Bolong, etc., have been appointed Associate Commissioners, Supreme Court Justices Antonio Carpio, Reynato Puno, Ma. Leonor Perez and even others were actively and extensively engaged in the practice before their appointments to the Supreme Court. Cayetano did not raise hell against their appointments.

My impression is, Cayetano's indecisive objection to the appointment of Brillantes is self-serving because Brillantes was once a counsel for retired Supreme Court Justice Victor Tinga in the latter's protest against the election of Cayetano's wife as mayor of Taguig City.

—REX E. REES,
rex_sanchez@yahoo.com

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HONDA

GMA didn't succeed Pres. Estrada

THE HERO is the article titled "Arroyo President" was more to right of succession." (Inquirer, 1/16/11). The succession of Pres. Erap Estrada Ilura, spokesperson of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, that the president was "by her own success" in the presidency when Mr. Arroyo took her oath of office. President Estrada never resigned from the presidency. In fact, the Supreme Court later had to reverse the vacuum, type of "constructive resignation" if only to erase the illusion of a vacancy in office, a legal sine qua non and ineffable to validate the illegal assumption into office of GMA.

GMA cannot play innocent because if there is any evidence whatsoever of an attempt to create a vacancy in either before her coming in, it is signed by her letter of irrevocable hero; but former Hilario Davide, donning that President Estrada was incapacitated, of what, in fact, he was not—a lie, from the personal hearsay testimony of Mr.

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

Firm in flawed project gets new deal

By Melvin Gascon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—A construction firm that was blamed for an anomalous road project in Santa Fe town has been awarded another P20-million road contract, evoking questions that the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) was to impose for an earlier botched project.

HTL-OQC Construction was given the contract for the repair and upgrading of the 670-meter portion of a zigzag road in Barangay Santa rosa, Dalton Pass, the Nueva Vizcaya-Ifugao boundary.

Rodolfo Tortalba Jr., chief of the DPWH Nueva Vizcaya second engineering district, said HTL-OQC would "correct" its own failure the controversy as a separate P20-million project, also along the same stretch of road, broke out.

"But we could have canceled (the award but (the contract) if there was any order from [DPWH central office] to sanction the contractor. We were waiting for that blacklisting order, [as a] protocol in the newspaper, but none came," Tortalba told Inquirer.

Since last year, the DPWH has been criticized by motorists for its failure to finish the repair of the zigzag road, delaying travel here.

The need to replace an almost finished but defective road, as ordered by DPWH, delayed the project completion for more than five months.

In its earlier project, HTL-OQC was ordered by the DPWH to remove and replace the more than 1-kilometer road section after an inspection team found cracks and discovered that the concrete pavement was swelling off from after the road was opened to traffic.

Investigation showed the contractor had used gravel and sand with inferior quality and less cement.

Nancy Chan, HTL-OQC owner, had no explanation for the irregularity, saying the engineer that the firm hired to remove the project had died last year.

Profesio Udtuan Jr., chief of the DPWH district maintenance section, said the Tuvera road repair was one of four DPWH typhoon infrastructure projects bid out in early March last year. Three projects in excess purchased of the zigzag road in Santa Fe.

In the bidding, two contractors were won by HTL-OQC, but only one was implemented last year because of the delay in the release of funds, Udtuan said.

"Since HTL-OQC) was the winning bidder, we had to award to them the [second] project because there was no reason for us not to, as there was no order from central office," he said.

RECORD KEEPING A Cebu City judge peers in a pile of documents gathering dust and dirt in a storage room at the Palace of Justice in the city, a scene repeated many times over in countless court offices nationwide and a problem of the country's judicial system.

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1948 law stands in way of bikes in Baguio City

BAGUIO CITY—Local officials have proposed to withdraw a 1948 ordinance that bans bicycles and motorcycles from the city's main streets, hoping to encourage motorists to leave their cars at home and use bikes instead.

Vice Mayor Daniel Fariñas said the suggestion is a worthy "green solution." He said traffic has overwhelmed the city government and locals.

"[It] has been trying to think 'out of the box'" to solve the problem without damaging the environment.

Ordinance No. 65 of 1948 used to prohibit motorcycles, bicycles, scooters and bicycles from being operated within the city. It was intended "for streets and Baguio town streets their use from downtown Session Road and Harrison Road, which are through the city's business districts."

Archeologist Dr. Professor Peter Mayor Marcos Domingo in Benguet to urge him to support a "problem-solving legislation" saying biking a form of bicycles would "allow for less congested streets and will help lessen the amount of pollution in the air, a persistent [environmental] problem."

Peter spoke on behalf of the Bicycle Cycle Movement, a local biking community.

"Bicycles have zero emissions and via bicycles can occupy the space of one car. Many tourists bring their bicycles up to Baguio to take on our trails and in the surrounding mountains ... It has also come to our attention that this ban on bicycles has a detrimental effect on the low-wage earners of our city who use bikes as their primary mode of transport. For example, those in their up to P5,000 a month in transportation costs," she said.

On Jan. 24, Sen. Pia Cayetano joined the campaign by urging Baguioans to consider bike lanes.

Cayetano, in interview, said: "I believe Baguio City would be the perfect model city to promote alternative modes of transportation, particularly biking, mostly like Barcelona, Portland is city in the United States, Copenhagen, Munich, Delft in Netherlands, Seville (also in the United States) and Paris."

At a recent public hearing, councilors appointed contractual about developing cycling lanes, but a few of them believe it may not necessarily become popular overnight.

Fariñas said promoting bicycles, to an alternative to private and public utility vehicles, could have to means given the fact that the average Baguio citizen is 6.1 meters wide.

Traffic congestion has become a big problem here because 25,000 Baguio vehicles registered by the Land Transportation Office in 2010 all make their way through narrow roads.

Maureen Catherine Arayo Rynn Bonnel and Jeanne Marie Gobo, Inquirer Northern Luzon

THE COUNTRY'S most famous cyclist, President Aquino, on a cross bicycle

Dirty water downs 17 people

By Joey Salviota
Inquirer Visayas

TALISAY CITY—At least 17 people were stricken ill with cholera believed caused by contaminated water in a Manila town, officials said yesterday.

Boyd Gene, Department of Health (DOH) assistant center in Eastern Visayas, said three of the patients were brought to the Sanitarium Negros Regional Medical Center in this city.

The cholera outbreak, he said, was reported in Barangay Tambacan, an island village in Talisay, Samar, last week.

The disease may have been caused by contaminated water in a spring where many have been consuming during heavy rains last month. The spring is the main source of water for the village's 1,158 residents.

Cases, however, said the spread of cholera has been prevented by health workers who distributed medicines and information for safe to the villagers.

The regional DOH urged residents to boil water first before drinking this.

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5,000 families target of antisquatting campaign

By Jhanna Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU, CITY—At least 5,000 families in the cities of Cebu and Mandaue will lose their homes as the two city governments launch a campaign to rid their waterways of structures to prevent floods.

Structures built on the two cities' waterways were blamed for the recent floods that swallowed roads and villages last week.

The two cities also agreed to dredge the Mahiga Creek on their boundary which overflowed on Jan. 28 and brought knee-deep floods to villages in the cities.

In Cebu City, the demolition would displace at least 3,000 families in nine areas including the Mahiga Creek to Mabolo, according to Noel Arlos, head of the city government's Squatters Prevention, Elimination and Encroachment Division (Speed).

Houses along the Guadalupe River may also be removed, said Arlos on Saturday.

Seven houses were demolished on Saturday along the Mahiga Creek. The operation stopped pending an official order from the city legal department, said Arlos.

The Cebu City government doesn't have funds for financial aid to the families, but could pay for the families' transportation funds to their provinces of origin, he said.

The displaced families, however, would be allowed to stay for two weeks in container vans that the city was putting up as shelters while the families haven't returned to their places of origin.

In Mandaue City, authorities are also planning to remove the shanties of at least 2,500 families in four villages there.

The city government has issued a demolition order on Tuesday for shanties along the Mahiga Creek.

Officials went to the area to inspect and inform the families of the demolition.

The families were given 30 days to negotiate with the city government in accordance with the Urban Development and Housing Act, or Republic Act No. 7279.

The Mandaue City government has not prepared any relocation site for the families but they would receive financial aid, according to officials.

WORKERS of the Cebu City government start tearing down shanties that have mushroomed under the Ft. Lagura Bridge beside the Mahiga Creek in a new campaign against illegal structures. JUNE MADAJUCAY

Cop taken by NPA rebs alive, hurt

SUBSTITUTE

TAGUM CITY—The policeman being kept captive by New People's Army (NPA) rebels is alive but wounded, police said.

PCO George Sabanta Jr. (Cabahit as earlier reported) was snatched by the guerrillas during an ambush on an antipolling activity in Trento, Agusan del Sur on Thursday.

Chief Insp. Nelly Hilagaria, spokesperson of the Eastern police, said the policeman and rebels were last seen in Monkayo, Compostela Valley. "He was wounded," said Hilagaria.

She said, however, that police have no idea on how serious Sabanta's injury was.

Sabanta was part of a security team for relief efforts for flood victims in Agusan del Sur and was assigned to the Barangay Kalikatan checkpoint in Barangay Datang Lupa in Trento when at least 100 rebels attacked.

Two civilians—including the 18-year-old son of a provincial employee—were killed in the attack and another policeman was wounded.

The rebels also took two 40-M armalite rifles during the raid.

Hilagaria said a crisis management committee, composed of officials from the police and local government, has been created to help in securing Sabanta's release.

The committee, she said, is trying to establish contact with the guerrillas. The policeman's family is coordinating with authorities.

She said she heard that negotiations were being conducted, but refused to comment on it further.

The guerrillas have yet to issue a statement on the attack and abduction of Sabanta. Also slain: 2Lt. Inquimer Mirabueno

MGB stops mining firm operations in CamSur

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

NAGA CITY—The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) in Bicol ordered a chromite mining company to stop its operation in Barangay Pinabungan, Lagonoy, Camarines Sur, after it was found to have no permit to operate in the area.

The "cease and desist order" against Primerock Philippines was issued on Feb. 3, after the MGB investigating team also found that the operation used explosives, which was both unauthorized and unsafe, said Reynaldo Juat, the Bureau's director for Bicol.

Juat said the MGB would seize the piles of chromite already mined by the company.

He said the MGB would coordinate with Camarines Sur Gov. Jesulito Pilapil to enforce the mass and desist order against Primerock, a small-scale mining company that operates under the exploration permit of a larger mining firm, the Bicol Chromite.

Pilapil welcomed MGB's move. He said one of the nine Chinese nationals working for the company was killed last year during blasting operations.

In October 2010, Pilapil complained to Senior Supt. Jonathan Mitang, police provincial director, of policemen escorting workers of Gemel, Primerock's supplier of explosives, since it has no permit to operate in his town.

Primerock, based in Valenzuela City obtained a small-scale mining permit from the Commission for Environment, promulgated on July 30, 2010. The permit was signed by Mines Director Leo Jasareno.

Veronica Jacques Lee, president and general manager of Philnet Exploration Corp., said the application was being processed by the MGB in Southern Visayas. With Carlo P. Romero, Inquirer Visayas

Coming soon on a beach near you: Cops in shorts

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—Tourist-intensive municipalities in the country can expect more police on the beaches, as authorities plan to police shirts and knee-length shorts.

The Philippine National Police and the Department of Tourism (DOT) are set to deploy specially trained police units on 14 major tourist destinations to ensure and assure tourists.

Supt. Romulo Orosco, Western Visayas police spokesperson, said on Wednesday that tourist police units would be set up under the PNP-DOT program Tourist Oriented Police for Community Order and Protection (TopCop).

The special units will be sent to Boracay Island, Aklan; Manila, Cebu, Camarines Sur, Baguio City, Davao City, Cagayan de Oro, Zamboanga, Iloilo, Puerto Princesa City, Camiguin, Cagayan Valley, Negros Oriental and Bocos Norte.

The tourist police units, except the existing Boracay Special Tourist Police Office, will be patterned after the Iloilo Tourist Police Unit which four-seven members per five teams assigned to tourist destinations on the island.

Tourist assistance centers staffed by a team from the PNP, the DOT and the local government will also be set up in tourist destinations.

In police stations in the 14 tourist cities, tourist assistance desks will be organized to provide assistance to tourists.

The tourist police units would be organized from the existing police units but would be transformed later into a separate structure as the National Operational Support Unit, said Orosco.

The police-tourist would undergo training on tourism and dealing with tourists, tourism regional director Edwin Trompeta said.

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2011

BATANGAS (BATANGAS CITY)

CAVITE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2011

MANILA (ERMITA AND PACO)

QUEZON PROVINCE (RAUMAN, SAMPALOC AND TAYABAS)

CAVITE (TANZA AND BAIC)

BETWEEN 8 AM AND 5 PM (WED), 8 AM AND 3 PM (THU)

WEDNESDAY TO THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9 – 10, 2011

NAVOTAS AND MANILA (TONDO)

BETWEEN 8 AM AND 5 PM (WED), 8 AM AND 3 PM (THU)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2011

BIÑAN CITY

QUEZON CITY

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2011

QUEZON CITY

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New witness seasoned pilot, 'officer of good standing'

By Alcuin Papa

LT. COL. ROMEO LIM, the newest witness in the Senate inquiry into the plea bargain between the Office of the Ombudsman and ex-military comptroller Carlos Garcia, is a seasoned pilot and "an officer of good standing" of the Philippine Air Force (PAF).

Lim has just completed a stint as commander of the Tactical Operations Group 9 based in Iloilo, Iloilo, and is now the PAF director for operations at the 3rd Air Division in Zamboanga.

He was "given clearance" by the PAF commanding general, Lt. Gen. Oscar Rebuta, to testify on the purported slush fund in the Armed Forces of the Philippines based on what he supervised when he was working with 26 military comptrollership in the AFP headquarters, according to PAF spokesperson Lt. Col. Miguel Ernesto Okol.

Lim, a 1986 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, received no "special instructions" from Rebuta except to "keep what he needs to say in the Senate," Okol told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo.

At yesterday's hearing at the Senate, Lim was introduced as the successor of then Lt. Col. George Rebuta as military head. He served from 2002-2004.

He said he was present when Rebuta delivered a P50 million "pabaon" (windfall gift) to Angelo Reyes, the then outgoing AFP chief of staff, in 2004.

He started working for the AFP deputy chief of staff for comptrollership in 1999 and served under Garcia and then Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot.

At the hearing, Lim said that he was afraid for his life and that he had applied for inclusion in the government's witness protection program.

LIM

Rabusa: Total of ₱240M set aside for 2 chiefs of staff

From page A1

added that he was not sure if Villanueva had indeed received the P40 million, which he said he had raised from the oil "protectors" for continued clearered operations.

He said he turned over the amount in increments of around P10 million each on several occasions to his then boss, military comptroller Carlos Garcia.

"I had doubts," Rabusa said at the resumption of the Senate blue ribbon committee's inquiry into the plea bargain between Garcia and state prosecutors. "I was tempted to ask Oriental Mindoro, but pressure's wise, it seemed that I would [release the] fund [to General Garcia, so I just let it go."

Rabusa said he eventually got the chance to ask Villanueva about the matter in a phone conversation after Garcia had retired. He said he was then asking for financial help but that Villanueva bragged off for lack of money.

He recalled asking Villanueva if the latter had received the P240 million from Garcia. "He" he quoted Villanueva as saying.

The next sentence that he heard didn't make sense to. So I don't know now whether the P240 million went," Rabusa said.

The amounts for the pabaon allegedly allocated for Villanueva, Donato and Reyes—all no-shows or somewhat's hearing—were drawn in a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Rabusa.

New witness

The retired lieutenant colonel was answering a new witness, Lt. Col. Antonio "Tonet" Lim, who was his deputy at the budget compartment of the ground headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo. (See profile on this page.)

Lim, who occasionally wiped off tears, asked to be made a witness because most [unclear] lies.

Lim surrendered Rabusa's account that the latter had delivered at least P160 million to Garcia in batches. He admitted that it was he who arranged the bulky cash for each delivery.

"The [paper bag] was empty [as we presented] to [the] Senate," he said.

Rabusa said Garcia had instructed him to set aside P100 million for Villanueva's retirement. According to a bank documents included in his presentation, P95 million was first deposited on July 19, 2001, and P65 million was kept in the bank on Sept. 12 of that year.

The total deposit had earned interests of P6.1 million by the time Rabusa made the last withdrawal on April 26, 2002, according to the documents signed by Benita Bonto, manager of the Security Bank branch on Herrera Street in Makati City.

Rabusa said he decided to close the account in anticipation of the formal retirement of the Armed Forces chief of staff.

Garcia also ordered that a pabaon be set aside for Clemax upon his retirement in 2002, Rabusa said.

"He'd insinuated me, 'Let's prepare a pabaon for General's [name],'" Rabusa said in reply to a question from Sen. Jinggoy Estrada.

Rabusa had earlier testified that Reyes was allocated P50 million in pabaon and that he personally delivered the money in the presence of Garcia's successor, Jacinto Ligot.

He said that in the case of Villanueva and Donato, he delivered the money to Garcia.

"Different comptrollers, different styles," he said.

Last November, Rabusa's testimony that Clemax received a monthly take of 5% millions.

Garcia's non-answers

"I gave it to (Clemax under Lieutenant Colonel) Garcia, who received P5 million per month for Clemax for two months when he was the acting budget officer. "I don't know if it was delivered, but I was interested to give the money to [unclear]Garcia."

He was not aware of any unsolicited money for Clemax.

Senators took turns in subjecting confirmation—to any other significant—witnesses—from Garcia. But the retired general repeatedly invoked his right against self-incrimination.

At one point Senator Estrada, who had brought Rabusa and Lim to the committee inquiry threatened to have Garcia detained.

"Mr. Chair, if this will be the answer of this general all throughout [the hearings] and the Ombudsman cannot jail him, let us lie the one to do that," Estrada said, addressing Sen. Teofisto Guingona III.

Estrada was particularly incensed when Garcia refused to answer whether he had indeed received the P100 million intended for Villanueva.

After a brief break, Guingona said citing Garcia for contempt and detaining him would be decided in an upcoming caucus among the blue ribbon committee members. But Garcia was subpoenaed to decide on the matter.

Ligot was equally silent, and also consistently denied accompanying Rabusa to deliver the P50 million to Reyes.

He likewise denied Rabusa's claim that Reyes had gifted him with a Swiss watch.

In an effort to help Ligot remember, Estrada quoted Rabusa's recollection of his meetings with his superiors. "I would wear the watch to our meetings, and Reyes was so proud that he would show us how the compass works. And Ligot would chime in and say he's also wearing the watch."

But Ligot was firm: "I do not have a watch," he said. Angat Reyes." He contended, however, that there were a few times he and Rabusa went together to Reyes' "White House" (official residence of the chief of staff in Camp Aguinaldo) to consult the latter on some matters.

Ligot also said he was not aware of any "pasalubong" (welcome) and pabaon operations in the AFP.

'James Bond' etc.

Rabusa said that during Villanueva's time, the latter wanted the PCIJA fund "preserved."

In his previous testimony, he said the fund operated like a pot, which was the alleged source of "money" and victims of gifts and other favors.

Rabusa identified mechanisms within the AFP which allowed the budget group to supposedly "conserve" cash and raise the PCIJA fund. Each time, a unit or office that became party to conversion allegedly got a percentage in commission.

He said a "James Bond 007" conversion style involved the Intelligence Service of the AFP, which supposedly got 10 percent of the amount converted.

Of the 90 percent conversion, 5 percent went to the accounting officers and 2 percent to the resident auditor, he said.

The blue ribbon committee decided to summon Brenda Cabrera, former body resident auditor, to the next hearing tentatively set on Monday.

Other bombshells

In two other bombshells, Rabusa alleged that Reyes once authorized the purchase of P200 million worth of luxurious condominium units in Thailand without a public bidding.

He said the purchase was financed by savings from the salary of military personnel. But he admitted that the purchase did not necessarily mean that the soldiers did not get their salary.

Instead, the money used was generated the savings from the salary budget released by the Department of Budget and Management. (Savings are made if the budget department allocated too much P15,000 money, than the AFP actually had only P10,000.)

The second bombshell was about the allegedly questionable purchase of "armoured aerial vehicles" (AAVs) worth $1 million during Ginsen's term.

The AAVs were actually armoured personnel carriers (APCs) bought from an Israeli company recommended by a retired official later "drafted" where used in actual operations.

P-Noy to offer Heidi job in graft fight but only if she wants it

From page A1

treatment prison in Mandaluyong City.

He said he did not want to compel Mendoza into accepting something that she had recommended as much difficulties. "I don't want to force anyone," he said.

The President made it clear that his "priority" in looking into the plea bargain between state prosecutors and Garcia was to "jail those who had committed crimes."

'Tearful appeal'

But the public may have seen the last testimony of Mendoza, who captured the public imagination with her dogged determination to expose corruption in the military.

The Senate blue ribbon committee yesterday tearfully decided to drop inquiries on matters pertaining to the Commission on Audit (COA).

"I'm appealing to the committee not to ignore my fears moving additional hassle to the people I worked with and to the people who are with me, and who stood with me all the way," she told the Senate blue ribbon committee.

Mendoza, a member of the committee, made the tearful appeal to reassure toward the end of the committee's inquiry into the plea bargain deal between Garcia and the Office of the Ombudsman.

Attack on COA

Her emotional statements was prompted by a call to her immediate earlier about the fact that the COA, her former employer, had doubted her testimony as an attack on the agency.

"I had felt how it was to be left on your own by many institutions, by many people. We had to journey to fight the media, the statements. It's quite tough to raise the standards of reviewing and auditing and still be accused of destroying institutions like the COA," she said.

What was most painful, she said, was that the attacks were coming from her former colleagues.

"COA said they stand by their auditors. I'm telling them I was your auditor, and I am your auditor until now," she said.

Mendoza appealed to the blue ribbon committee chair, Sen. Teofisto Guingona III, not to involve her subjectively as a witness person on COA matters. Guingona assented to her request.

Mission accomplished

After testifying on the Garcia case from 2007 to 2009, and testifying in the House of Representatives on the corruption in relation to the case, Mendoza said she believed she had accomplished her mission.

She said an emotional tribute to military officers and men, auditors, comptrollers, the COA, and government employees who were doing their job with integrity.

Mendoza said she was never angry with Garcia. "I know I've been fair with you and I say that in the interests of the system, and that system I'm also a part of and the COA is also a part of. I'm not destroying institutions. I want reforms within the system. I want a clean government," she added.

A reserved officer of the Air Force, she saluted the generals and "honorable men in uniform" for defending the country, and the women, and men and women of the COA who "served for a cause" despite the pressures.

COA reaction

In a statement, the COA yesterday disputed the assessments of Mendoza, who said her gripes with her former office in connection with her investigation of military secondary.

The COA said the statements questioned the honesty and credibility of state auditors.

"Most of all, we take exception to the doubts raised by Mendoza on the honesty of her fellow auditors and the credibility of other COA officials. The statements evidently could not have been unearthed from the mountains of documents by a single individual," the agency said.

It said the whole COA organization stood by the integrity of its auditors.

The agency said it did not expect Mendoza's audit report on military transactions. Mendoza was tasked with investigating the Armed Forces after Garcia was probed for allegedly misusing ill-gotten wealth.

Interagency probe

The COA said that Mendoza and the rest of the audit team was assigned to an interagency investigation group upon the request of then Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo. The team was composed of personnel from the Office of the Ombudsman, CDA, Presidential Anti-Graft Commission and Department of Justice.

The head of the group was from the Office of the Ombudsman, and the findings of the team were supposed to be submitted to the office for evaluation and consolidation.

Rowen, according to the COA, it was never supposed to receive Mendoza's report and could not have rejected it.

"Thus, the COA could not have 'rejected' any audit report since it was not expecting any audit report from the team. At no time did the commission assign an audit undertaking or limited a special audit team tasked to undertake a special audit on that special audit," the agency said

Murder raps vs Ping junked; court voids arrest

From page A1

noted against Lacson in "unlikely and not quick."

Lacson would be the fourth high-profile opponent of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to be freed from legal restraints since President Aquino took power, records show.

The three others were linked to plots against Arroyo.

Last July, former Marine Col. Ariel Querubin was released on the custody of a senior officer. Last December, detained Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV was released on the custody of Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile under an Aquino amnesty proclamation.

Last month, another ruled officer here, Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, was released also to the custody of a senior officer.

Aquino assurance

Mr Aquino yesterday assured Lacson that his administration would safeguard his rights when he comes out from hiding.

"He appeal to him that always been that we will guarantee him a fair trial and we will protect all of his rights," the President told reporters.

However, Justice Ramon Bato Jr. to assure the Court of Appeals' decision. Associate Justices Jose Enrique Jr. and Isaias Dicdican concurred.

Dawer and Emmanuel Carlos were dismissed as the Ombudsman found both guilty of crimes in November 2009. Their charged besides were later recommended in Caribe.

Lacson had asked the appellate court to dismiss the murder charges against him in a petition questioning Sandiganbayan's March 14 Regional Trial Court Branch 133.

The justice department and lawyers for the victims' families filed separate murder charges against Lacson for the death of Dacer and Corbito.

Manaco credibility

In an 80-page decision, the appellate court thrashed the credibility of another accused in the case, former Aviano Supt. Cesar Manaco, whose testimony provided the basis for the murder charges.

It said Manaco had the "propensity to manufacture himself under oath" in a number of his affidavits.

For the court, Manaco may have also been influenced by others to turn or perjure in the preparation of his Feb. 13, 2009 affidavit linking Lacson to the killings.

The court said Manaco's contradictions were shown in his testimony.

It said that 18 years ago, Manaco denied knowledge about a so-called "special operations" to kill Dacer in a March 1, 2000 affidavit. Manaco said he had not implicated Lacson in the so-called "special operations."

But this time, it said, Manaco "arrogantly ... contradicted himself in another affidavit dated Feb. 15, 2000, in which he said police Supt. Michael Ray Aquino had told the special operations group that Lacson approved and cleared the Lacson and by Mendoza-led theft."

Manaco "is not a credible and trustworthy witness," it said.

"Under oath, he contradicted himself on material points. Its inconsistencies and material contradictions affect the credibility of Cesar Manaco and the veracity of his statements," the court said.

It added that with the "serious discrepancy on a material fact," the trial court judge "should have denied the issuance of a warrant of arrest and dismissed the case against Lacson for lack of probable cause."

The court took note of the "haste" with which Mendoza-Dacer case-light years to implicate Lacson.

It also noted that Manaco had admitted in television interviews that the military's then intelligence chief, Brig. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, had offered to help him and his family migrate to the United States in exchange for testifying against Lacson.

'Lacson is free'

The court also said that the allegations of the Dacer daughters Kristine and Kimberly that the murder of their father because he (Dacer) had opposed Lacson's appointment as chief of the Philippine National Police "is nothing but an inference or conjecture not supported by evidence on record."

Lacson's lawyers, Alex Avelino, was elated at the decision. "For all intents and purposes, Senator Lacson is free," Avelino said in earlier phone.

He said Lacson would be expected to continue "in the very near future" so that he could perform his "duty as a senator."

He said the appellate court's decision means that Lacson "has been cleared of any involvement" in the Dacer-Corbito case.

"Senator Lacson had faith in the judicial system. He has won, and we're very happy," Avelino said. "With this, anyone can be'll come out."

Prosecution undaunted

But the prosecution team vowed to pursue the case.

Evidently surprised when reached by phone, State Prosecutor Hazel Valdez told the Inquirer that the state's decision to seek for Lacson's arrest "still stands."

"I am very sure we will file a motion for reconsideration," Valdez said. The prosecution has 15 days to ask for a review of the ruling.

If the prosecution motion is denied, "we still have the Supreme Court," Valdez said.

Lawyers differed on whether the arrest warrant against Lacson was no longer effective, with Valdez saying it should still be in effect.

Suspended animation

But human rights lawyer Theodore Te said Lacson may now declare without having to worry about being arrested. He described the arrest warrant as "suspended animation."

"It said the prosecution could file a motion for reconsideration and also bring the case to the Supreme Court. If the prosecution is upheld, the arrest warrant would be in effect once again," he said.

Demetrio Custodio, the Dacer family's counsel, declined comment but said he would send a text message to inform the family of the decision.

Manaco's lawyer, Ferdinand Topacio, said the appellate court's decision was "not a cause of concern."

"It is not yet final and executory," he said. "It is just one step, and not the last, in the criminal justice. It is always a long and arduous road to truth and justice, especially in the Philippines." With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, TJ Burgonio and Marlon Ramos

Garcia plunder case not lost, says Sandiganbayan executive

From page A1

spoke on condition of anonymity because of a gag order from higher-ups.

One way is for the prosecutors to ask the court to invalidate the plea bargain so that Garcia's guilty plea in the lesser offenses will be nullified and he had to retried, the source said.

When this takes place, the prosecutors may move for the temporary detention of plunder trial or the conduct of a new trial in order to present newly discovered evidence, the source said.

The Sandiganbayan had earlier said the plea bargain on Garcia's plunder case was still subject to approval.

The Office of the Solicitor General, which wants the deal nullified, reminds that it has been virtually appointed because the era was allowed to enter a guilty plea in the lesser charges and not to the principal charge of plunder. Plunder is a nonbailable offense.

Garcia has also turned over to the state most of the assets specified in the deal, which totaled P135.410 million, the court said.

The Sandiganbayan ruled earlier that should the prosecutors decide to withdraw support for the plea bargain, they could still the court unilaterally and revert to trial.

The justices said the prosecutors could also appeal to the court, but was also grilled over why he relied only on the letter of Garcia's wife Charito to file the information against Garcia in 2000.

Angelo Reyes and Domocilio Villanueva, chairman chiefs of staff of the Armed Forces, were not present at the hearing for different reasons.

Villanueva's wife has just died, while Reyes' lawyer sought the inhibition of Justices Jorge Ernesto Villarama Jr. and Rodolfo Ponferrada from the case.

In the court, Manaco may have also been influenced by others to turn or perjure in the preparation of his Feb. 13, 2009 affidavit linking Lacson to the killings.

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Manaco "is not a credible and trustworthy witness," it said.

"Under oath, he contradicted himself on material points. Its inconsistencies and material contradictions affect the credibility of Cesar Manaco and the veracity of

Don't want to rush

In the early part of the hearing, Defion asked Gutierrez point blank if the Office of the Ombudsman could still file the plea bargain in view of Rubina and Mendoza's convictions on purported corruption in the military.

Gutierrez said her office had not received a copy of these convictions. Defion, however, subsequently pressed on that there were inside "under oath."

The Ombudsman said she had formed a panel that was under orders to gather the necessary papers. She said she and her team should be allowed "to assess the evidence."

She added: "because right now, you have to understand that of course there will be findings and as head of the Office of the Ombudsman, I don't want to rush into anything and even recommendation that the investigators will have on this justice for one. We don't want to rush, Mr. Chairman."

Justification: Rubina, Heidi

Gutierrez released audio presses from Defion, Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Edilberto Sandiganbayan chair Sen. Teofisto Guingona III. He let before she said she could not reach the withdrawal of the prosecution's motion to approve the plea bargain "because we have a process."

She also said it was not a matter of "saying yes or no," and that "we're being searched by the public if we withdraw, there should be a justification."

Defion replied that the events

'We created doubt'

Rubina had testified on purported payoffs to AFP chiefs of staff, including Reyes, Villanueva and Roy Cimatu, from a military chair fund. Mendoza, on the other hand, had testified on the payout and concerning the questionable disbursements of P200 million from the intelligence fund of Malacañang reimbursements for Philippine peacekeeping operations.

But Assistant Special Prosecutor Joseph Capistrano said Mendoza's findings on the UN Fund, including a missing P50 million, were insufficient to convict Garcia.

"When the two (earlier asked in court) by one of the justices whether or not the P50 million belonged [to the P200 million], she was not able to give a conclusive answer. So, somehow she created a doubt. We created a doubt that the P50 million may not be part [of the fund]," Capistrano said.

"In a criminal case, if we create a doubt, that could be interpreted in favor of the accused," he said.

Capistrano said Mendoza herself had admitted that her audit of the UN fund was based on "incomplete documents" because the military did not provide her documents to back old

'Garcias withdrew P128M in 4 days'

By TJ Burgonio

QUEZON CITY, Philippines — Former Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Angelo Reyes yesterday said the withdrawal of P128 million from their bank accounts in a span of four days before the Court of Appeals issued a freeze order in 2004.

"We can no longer trace the amounts or funds withdrawn from their accounts," Ombudsman Deputy Special Prosecutor Joseph Capistrano said.

The Garcia family had 114 bank accounts in 13 financial institutions in 2004, including some P77 million and $1.7 million, but Garcia declined access to confirm this.

Replying to a question from Sen. Frank Defion, Assistant Special Prosecutor Jose Balmeo Jr. said the Garcias withdrew P128 million as a condition for the plea bargain with the military.

Said Defion: "And nonetheless the fact that the condition was not complied with, you proceeded to enter into this plea bargain?"

Balmeo replied in the affirmative.

Capistrano said that of the Garcias' total accounts, the deposits of about $720,000 plus more than P35 million had been frozen by the Court of Appeals.

Special Prosecutor Wendell Sadit said her colleagues had requested the freeze on the withdrawn P128 million could be reactivated as forfeiture cases against Garcia.

But Defion said: "If they cannot recover it as part of the plea bargain, I cannot imagine how they can recover it on the forfeiture cases."

Cultural bodies to rule if Alcuaz gets state funeral, honors

From page A1

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"I will throw the question to the CCP-NCCA board," Medina Bersoza, executive director of the NCCA, told the Inquirer yesterday.

Alcuaz died on Wednesday morning of a lingering illness. He was 78.

The two cultural agencies jointly administer the Order of the National Artists, a title "conferred by the President of the Philippines upon recommendation by the Board," according to the NCCA website.

Recipients of the Order of the National Artists, a state honor for important Filipino artists, are entitled to state necrological consonances at the CCP and some honors after cremation, or interment, according to the NCCA website.

Alcuaz's body lies in state in the Memorial Chapel of Solher Hours on Araneta Avenue, Quezon City, burial is on Feb. 8 at Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City, said Jack Bootlos, owner of Galerie Joaquin, which has been holding since 2007 exquisite retrospectives on the life, works and influence of Alcuaz.

"I found there might be necrological services at the CCP," Bootlos said. But if the state funeral didn't push through, Alcuaz would be buried at the Loyola.

There, a bronze of a state funeral, but there's politics behind the National Artist Awards and there's a nauseating order," he said.

Row over GMA move

Alcuaz was among the joint CCP-NCCA in 2009 to be the National Artist for the Visual Arts, along with Ramon Santos and the late Manuel Conde and Lamberto Francisco, for music, cinema and literature, respectively.

Their proclamation as the National Artists was endorsed to then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

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The artists' community protested Arroyo's move, especially since Alcuaz was her adviser for culture and the arts. Since Alcuaz was concurrently executive director of the NCCA at the time, she had also taken part in the deliberations and selection of the new National Artists.

The protests, who included Bienvenido Lumbera, Lazaro Francisco, Ramon Orlina, Ernesto Santos, Virginia Benedicto and Antonio Trillanes IV, he alleged by losing their "valid neutrality."

Ermita, Santiago and Esmeralda showed up and announced that they would not withdraw themselves from the proceedings.

Don't want to rush

In the early part of the hearing, Defion asked Gutierrez point blank if the Office of the Ombudsman could still file the plea bargain in view of Rubina and Mendoza's convictions on purported corruption in the military.

Gutierrez said her office had not received a copy of these convictions. Defion, however, subsequently pressed on that there were inside "under oath."

The Ombudsman said she had formed a panel that was under orders to gather the necessary papers. She said she and her team should be allowed "to assess the evidence."

She added: "because right now, you have to understand that of course there will be findings and as head of the Office of the Ombudsman, I don't want to rush into anything and even recommendation that the investigators will have on this justice for one. We don't want to rush, Mr. Chairman."

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Suspended animation

But human rights lawyer Theodore Te said Lacson may now declare without having to worry about being arrested. He described the arrest warrant as "suspended animation."

"It said the prosecution could file a motion for reconsideration and also bring the case to the Supreme Court. If the prosecution is upheld, the arrest warrant would be in effect once again," he said.

Demetrio Custodio, the Dacer family's counsel, declined comment but said he would send a text message to inform the family of the decision.

Manaco's lawyer, Ferdinand Topacio, said the appellate court's decision was "not a cause of concern."

"It is not yet final and executory," he said. "It is just one step, and not the last, in the criminal justice. It is always a long and arduous road to truth and justice, especially in the Philippines." With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, TJ Burgonio and Marlon Ramos

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Dazzling mastery

But many artists agree that the career of Alcuaz was of National Artist caliber and he should get state honors befitting his stature as an artist.

As a result, Alcuaz's proclamation as a National Artist is not considered controversial.

Although the artist community had generally known the painter's health was deteriorating, many expressed shock at his sudden death.

Most 'European'

Trained in the Philippines and Europe, Alcuaz was probably the most "European" among artists of his generation, celebrated mainly for his dramatic while earning respect as well for figurative genres, such as the still life, nude, portrait and landscape. He painted in oil, acrylic, watercolor and mixed media.

He was most European in his abstracts, which celebrate the subconscious and the instinctive in vivid colors and textures. Many of these works are watched and generally know it to bring a total collection to comprehend them.

In his figurative works, Alcuaz was best known for his nudes and Tres Marias (trios of beautiful), long-gowned women engaged in domestic activities. Critic Alice Guillermo said the nudes showed the influence of Velazquez and Goya. Indeed, the Spanish masters are legendary for painting the "shameless."

In another vein, Gil Reyes, however, Alcuaz, especially in his still lifes, was influenced by Cezanne, Picasso, Bonnard and, of course, Matisse.

Alcuaz was also a sculptor. He painted on ceramic plates, his colorful figures and designs enhanced by glazing.

School of Masters

Alcuaz was born on June 6, 1932, in Santa Cruz, Manila. He finished early schooling at D. Alban Elementary School and San Beda High School. Then took up law at Ateneo de Manila University but dropped it to study at the University of the Philippines.

He continued his art training at Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid, the same academy where the Filipino masters Luna, Hidalgo, Fabian de la Rosa and Amorsolo had attended.

For different periods of his life, Alcuaz was mainly based in Spain, Germany and Czechoslovakia. He married Ute Schmitz, a German, with whom he had three children.

NEWS

Joey de V testifies at Neri trial

By Leila B. Salaverria

FORMER ELECTION chief Benjamin Abalos allegedly demanded commissions from ZTE Corp. officials during a meeting in China in 2006, telling them that "the President, the Speaker and the political party" were waiting for the money, according to testimony from businessman Jose de Venecia III.

Abalos was referring to former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and his father, former House Speaker Jose de Venecia, said De Venecia, who was testifying at the Sandiganbayan trial of former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

De Venecia said he had told Abalos that Arroyo and his father did not know anything about the project.

Neri, who headed the National Economic and Development Authority, is being charged with graft for allegedly meeting with ZTE officials when the broadband project was under assessment by the Neda, and for conferring with Abalos on the deal.

Abalos is facing separate criminal charges.

De Venecia said he was among those present at the meeting in Shenzen, China. He said he had flown to Shenzen to meet with ZTE officials upon Abalos' invitation.

He said his firm, Amsterdam Holdings, Inc. (AHI), was the first to propose an NBN project to the government but was not in China's ZTE Corp. The $329 million project was eventually awarded.

De Venecia said Abalos had asked him to withdraw AHI's proposal because Abalos himself wanted to go into the telecommunications business. But this was his "last hurrah."

He said Abalos also earlier offered him $10 million to withdraw from the project.

At the Shenzen meeting, during which ZTE officials proposed that the corporation provide the equipment for the NBN project, Abalos allegedly demanded that commissions from ZTE be given to him to get the whole thing over with.

"From being calm, he became a little bit demanding... he said the president, speaker and political party (are) waiting for those commissions," De Venecia said.

At this point, he said he took Abalos aside and told him that it was "highly inappropriate" to say that the president, speaker and political party were waiting for commissions.

In an earlier interview, De Venecia said that at the time, he believed Arroyo was not involved. But now, he said it was difficult to think that Arroyo did not know about what was happening.

Aplus METRO

DID YOU KNOW

SIX-TIME world bowling champion Kelsey "Penny" Kemponcone is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for having three addresses recently: Youngest World Bowling Champion at 18 years old, World Wrist Titles in three different decades, and most worldwide titles in a career.

Nikki Donkin, Inquirer Research

CANCELLATION OF DE LA FUENTE'S FRANCHISE

'LTFRB order without basis'

By Paolo D. Manresilo

SINGER Claire de la Fuente yesterday asked the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to reverse its decision to cancel her bus company's franchise.

In her motion for reconsideration, De la Fuente, the owner of Philippine Corinthian Liner Corp. which operates 167 buses on Edsa, denied that her company took part in Sirumdumi's ban order in Marcos Manila which left thousands of commuters stranded.

She called the cancellation of her bus franchise "baseless and malicious," adding that the LTFRB merely wanted to make an example of her to scare other bus operators.

The transport body last month issued an order canceling the franchise of the singer's bus company on a plea moved over reports of fake tickets which was launched to protest the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's decision to impose the number coding scheme on passenger buses to ease traffic on major roads.

"We agree that a franchise is a privilege granted to [Philippine Corinthian], subject to restrictions imposed by law and public interest. But it cannot be withdrawn on a whimsical, arbitrary, capricious and baseless manner," said Harry Roque, De la Fuente's lawyer.

He questioned the LTFRB's decision to cancel the franchise of his client's bus company compared to smaller firms whose operations were only suspended for a limited period.

According to Roque, De la Fuente was made an example of because she was the

LTFRB | A2

QCPD forms group to solve car theft cases

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE POLICE have formed a group that would focus on the prevention of car theft incidents and the arrest of car jackers in Quezon City.

At the same time, Chief Supt. Benjach Mauricio, Quezon City Police District (QCPD) director, yesterday urged the public to participate in the campaign against criminality as he announced the creation of the District Anti-Carnapping Unit (Dacu).

Mauricio said the creation of Dacu was in line with their continuing program to subdue car theft cases in the city.

"I ask for patience from the residents [in view of] the current situation but rest assured we are addressing the problem," he added.

He said that Dacu's primary responsibility was to conduct a relentless campaign against organized crime, particularly carnapping groups.

According to Mauricio, there were five notorious gangs operating in Metro Manila.

QCPD | A14

QCPD forms group . . .

From page A21

including the Bonifacio Group, Dominguez Group, Kaby Ocampo Group and Francisco Group.

Mayor's said Dara would be headed by Insp. Ferdinand Villanueva. It would be composed of six teams with seven members each whose task would be to solve the cases of car nabbings in Quezon City.

He added that the group would be supported by Motorand Intelligent Crime Operations (Maxo) which is composed of unfinished motorcycle-riding policemen previously under the District Public Safety Battalion.

According to Binamira, car theft cases were down compared to previous years.

"It seems like there's an increase because the cases are all high-profile, but in truth, the crime incidence is declining," the QCPD official said.

He called on the community and the public to help them out in their campaign by reporting car theft incidents immediately to the police.

"The involvement of the community and the vigilance of the people will certainly be a big factor and deterrence against incidents of car theft," he said.

He added that his men were in constant coordination with the Highway Patrol Group and barangay officials.

'LTFRB order without basis'

From page A21

industry's "poster girl."

He presented MMDA records which showed that on the day of the strike, all Philippine Columbian buses, except those covered by the number coding scheme, plied their routes.

However, LTFRB Board Member Manuel Iringan said Dr. to Pasay failed to present those documents when they conducted hearings on the case.

He added that they also had documents, including those from the MMDA, which showed that all of the Columbian buses participated in the strike.

"The owners denied joining the strike," Iringan said.

But Bautista pointed out that even if Dr. to Pasay's company had joined the mass action, "the LTFRB cannot penalize [it] because [its] franchise is holding a strike because that would be a violation of their constitutional right to free expression."

He said that the move was "a challenge to the LTFRB's effectiveness" on bus operators.

The ban denied by Iringan also said that other bus companies who had also participated in the strike would be issued no penalties in the coming weeks.

But in his case, he reiterated Metro bus companies be seeking an "exorbitant" fare increase.

At a hearing yesterday, Iringan said the LTFRB had asked bus companies to submit financial documents that would support their claim that the current fares were no longer enough to cover their operating costs.

Last month, the Interim Bus Operators Association (Interbus) filed a fare hike petition. They asked that the P9 fare be the first kilometer be raised to P9.6 with P2.35 for every succeeding kilometer from the current P8.40.

Manila hit by 3 fires; 6 injured

By Jeannette I. Andrade

ON THE FIRST day of the four of the Sublist, six residents of a Chinese Filipino family were injured while 160 families lose their homes when fires broke out in an apartment and two dare areas in Manila.

The sum of damage in property was estimated at P35 million.

Injured were Manuel Chua, 67, who sustained facial burns; Phillip Chua, 40; Regina Ann Chua, 34; Eileen Ann Chua, 32; Trixie Chua, 28; and Evangeline Chua, 25.

Senior Fire Officer 2 John Joseph Julipac, arson investigator of the Manila Fire District (MFD), said that the Chuas were rescued by firefighters from their apartment on the second floor of a six-story residential building in 1115 Soler St. in Sta. Cruz.

The fire broke out in the family's house at 4:45 a.m. and was put out at 5:00 a.m.

According to Julipac, it may have started from an electric stick left burning by the family on their altar.

Meanwhile, the by 40 disaster at 1:00 a.m. on Interior 2-3, Tibiddad corner Juan Luna Streets in Gagalangin, Tondo.

Juanito Galia, 48, told the bureau's that they were sleeping when they heard someone shouting that there was a fire.

"When we evacuated from our house, the flames were so near that we only had time to grab some of the clothes we could reach," she said.

Later in the day, a fire struck another slum area of the corner of Masinglaya and Bonifacio Streets in Sta. Cruz.

At press time, the blaze was still raging.

NO ORDINARY TRAFFIC VIOLATOR
Vincent Escobar, the driver of a red Ferrari (XRJ 777) which damaged the center island of Ortigas Avenue in Pasig City earlier this morning, slips something into the palm of an MMDA personnel after his car was towed away. In his right hand are several P 1,000 bills. Escobar, who said he was ordered to a funeral, refused to cooperate with traffic enforcement or let anyone touch the car. — Photo by Boy Cruz

MMDA: Rotunda eases traffic in Baclaran area

By Tina G. Santos

TRAFFIC in Baclaran, Parañaque City, has improved considerably following the completion of a roundabout or rotunda in the area, according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

The roundabout is located at the center of Redemptorist Street and the Roxas Boulevard Service Road. It has a diameter of 24 meters and has been operational since Monday.

"There has been a significant increase in travel speed of 20-30 kilometers per hour in the area since our roundabout became operational, a very significant improvement," said Traffic Engineering Center (TEC) head Nestor Nebrida.

"The roundabout has improved the overall layout of the Baclaran area and has eased traffic congestion which has been a longtime problem," added MMDA Chief Francis Tolentino.

Tests said the area had been declared a no-parking zone to ensure that the traffic would remain free-flowing.

Before the construction, simulations studies conducted by TEC engineers showed there would be a 20% percent increase in travel speed in the area with the construction of a roundabout.

TEC transferred the Organized Bus Route terminal at the service road in front of the Redemptorist Church and removed 10 of sidewalk vendors and illegal structures.

The MMDA-TEC is also constructing a roundabout at the intersection of Redemptorist-President Quirino avenue if R. Hermoso at the end of 12th Line 2 although the area is clogged with illegal vendors.

Tolentino said the vendors should be removed from the area to make way for the project.

The MMDA decided to build roundabouts to ease intersections in its continuing efforts to improve Metro Manila's traffic situations.

Tolentino said they had identified possible sites for the roundabo.

JAMES CAMERON's 'SANCTUM' USES THE SAME CAMERA DEVELOPED FOR 'AVATAR'

(New York, Jan 19/USA Today)

The director of AVATAR and TITANIC is taking forward his penchant for fighting spirit in his forthcoming 3D underwater disaster movie 'Sanctum'. Hot Hollywood producer James Cameron says filmmaking is not about the equipment but about images and imaginations.

The cameras used on 'Sanctum' included the same cameras developed for and used on 'Avatar'. The team knew that if they were to fully immerse the audience in the underwater world, it had to be in 3D,' said the three-time Oscar award winner.

'Along the way, the men developed a new photographic system that could operate in these extreme environments and deliver a unique cinematic experience. But as mind-blowing as all this new technology is, filmmaking is not about the equipment. It is about ideas, images and imaginations. It's about storytelling,' Cameron told IMDB in an e-mail interview.

He said audiences will experience a different style in 'Sanctum' compared to his magnum opus 'Avatar'.

'Avatar' had so many broad vistas that the difference between watching the movie in 2D and in 3D is not that great because the more expansive the image, the less you feel in close contact with objects and characters.

'The difference between experiencing 'Sanctum' in 2D and in 3D is actually much greater because the 3D will constantly be informing you, in the experience of watching the movie, with the sense of claustrophobia,' said Cameron.

'We've done test screenings and we've seen that there's a palpable, white-knuckle sense of anxiety in watching the movie, which is exactly what we wanted to create. Usually, when you go to a movie, your consciousness floats above the film. 3D sucks you in and makes it a visceral experience,' added the 3D technology's greatest advocate.

Both 'Avatar' and 'Sanctum' have been shot on the Cameron/Pace Fusion 3D Camera System, a stereoscopic 3D camera system that delivers incredible results that can deliver flawless IMAX projection in 3D.

A play by Susan Kim
Adapted from the novel by Amy Tan
Artistic Director
Guest Director
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Onstage, 2nd Flr., Greenbelt 1,
Paseo de Roxas cor. Legaspi St.,
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METROBRIEFS

Court finds lawyer guilty

A JUDGE has sentenced lawyer Melanio "Bates" Mauricio Jr. to serve four to six months in jail after he was found guilty of violating Article 200 of the Revised Penal Code or threatening to publish libelous stories if he was not given money. In a decision handed down on Jan. 28, Judge Manuel Sta. Cruz of the Quezon City Metropolitan Trial Court (branch 40) also ordered Mauricio to pay a P2,000 fine. "There is no doubt that the acts of accused are a violation of Article 200 ... [as he] threatened to publish articles which would discredit and impede views and dexterity to Fundimware ... even if no private damages, the latter would place paid ads [in] the accused's newspaper and television programs," the judge said. The case was based on the complaint of Fundimware Inc., manufacturer of GXS Love Spread. Court records showed that Mauricio reportedly used his office to pressure company officials in his threat to publish negative stories about the company, specifically that there were worms found inside a can of the liver spread by a couple who had a complaint with the Bureau of Food and Drug Administration in July 2004. During a hearing, the couple asked the store for P150,000 as damages but the latter refused. Fundimware Inc. claimed that the threatening words Mauricio contacted them and threatened to publish negative stories about their products unless the firm paid the couple P150,000. A settlement of P50,000 was later reached, with P10,000 going to the couple and the rest going to the store's foundation, in exchange for the couple withdrawing their complaint. In a statement sent to the reporter, Mauricio cited what he said were "grave problems" in the judge's decision, namely the fact that the latter did not allow him to present evidence in his defense in court because his affidavit had not been submitted "on time" and in contrast, the judge allowed the food company to present several witnesses although their affidavits had also not been marked.

Julie M. Aurelio

5 protesters freed in San Juan

FIVE of the eight persons who were detained at the San Juan police station for allegedly instigating the violence that broke out between a demolition team and residents of Barangay Corazon de Jesus in San Juan City last month were released yesterday, PO1 Kennie Cruz said that Raymund Bilodi, Rhoel Angeles, Chua de Ocampo, Elmer Costa and Mac Travis Bernet were freed after they posted bail of P60,000. The five were charged with direct assault, illegal assembly and illegal possession of deadly weapons in connection with the violent clash that erupted between San Juan City policemen and residents of Barangay Corazon de Jesus and their supporters on the other on Jan. 25. The city government plans to build a bigger city hall building in the area which is near the Pinaglabanan Shrine.

Kristine Felicia Manguerra

The WORLD

Lira Lorraine B. Bunoz

Young Sudanese start protest movement

NAIROBI, KENYA—The messages starting going up on Facebook about two weeks ago, to any Sudanese who cared.

"The people of Sudan will not remain silent anymore," said a Facebook group called Youth for Change. "It is about time we demand our rights and take what's ours in a peaceful demonstration that will not involve any acts of sabotage.

"It is about time we decide what we're really made of." The group said: "Our brothers in Tunisia did it and so did our brothers in Egypt. It is about time for us."

In the past week, to an unusual chorus of holdouts, thousands of young Sudanese, many responding to the Facebook call, have banned bravings and streets to protest against their government. The protests in Egypt and Tunisia are obvious—Sudan is a notoriously repressive Arab country, ruled by the same strongman for more than 21 years, historically and culturally close in its big brother just down the Nile: Egypt. And it was already seething with economic and political discontent even before democratic protest started taking to the streets of Cairo.

Although the protests are of recent month—a few dozen to a few hundred young people—they seem to be well-organized and widespread across northern Sudan, from Khartoum, the capital, to Omdurman and El Obeid in North, a relatively quiet city on the banks of the Nile.

The government tried to be focused on Sudan's wounded economic and practical things, like the rapidly rising price of sugar and fuel, although protesters have also thwarted out against political repression. The police have cracked down hard, arresting dozens and beating countless others with batons and sticks. One student died this week from injuries that other protesters said had been caused by the police.

Still, hudreds of students even fired up, even if the security forces USE in line behind them.

"There is a rising consciousness in the region," said Izzeldin Obeid, 29, an amateur filmmaker who joined a protest in Khartoum. "So why not go for it?"

Despite its reputation as a tightly controlled police state, Sudan has a history of successful protests. Bread-fuel uprisings brought down the government in 1964 and 1985. Three successive embedded strokes have other a hopeful coming in Egypt. People taking to the streets with specific economic and political complaints, the government initially trying to crack down and then the security services joining the protests and the governmental finally responding to their demands. *New York Times News Service*

Tens of thousands of Yemenis stage 'Day of Rage'

SANAA—Tens of thousands of protesters massed on Thursday at Sanaa University for a "Day of Rage" against Ali Abdullah Saleh's rule, while a smaller number of backers clashed a central square in support of the embattled Yemeni president.

The protest, the biggest staged against Saleh in past weeks, came despite the president announcing on Wednesday that he would not seek another term and that he had postponed controversial April elections—two key opposition demands.

Opposition leaders, who have been calling protesters onto the streets in a bid to force Saleh into making reforms, had said they would push on with Thursday's planned "Day of Rage" but that they would also study his latest announcements.

Their plans were affected when armed supporters of Saleh's General People's Congress took over Al-Tahrir Square, the planned protest venue, on Wednesday night, setting up tents and carrying portraits of the president.

Protest organizers from early Thursday drove through the streets blaring out over megaphones that the venue had been changed to Sanaa university about two kilometers from the square.

They blamed the change on the fact that "the men of the ruling party and their armed elements are holding Al-Tahrir."

The switch in venue did little to dampen the enthusiasm of protesters, who flocked to the university where they were joined by leaders of the Common Forum, an alliance of five parliamentary opposition parties including the Islamist Al-Islah and the Islamic Socialist Party.

Protesters held banners reading, "The people demand a change" of regime, and "No to a hereditary regime, no to an extension of mandate."

Saleh pledged he would not seek office on Wednesday. AFP

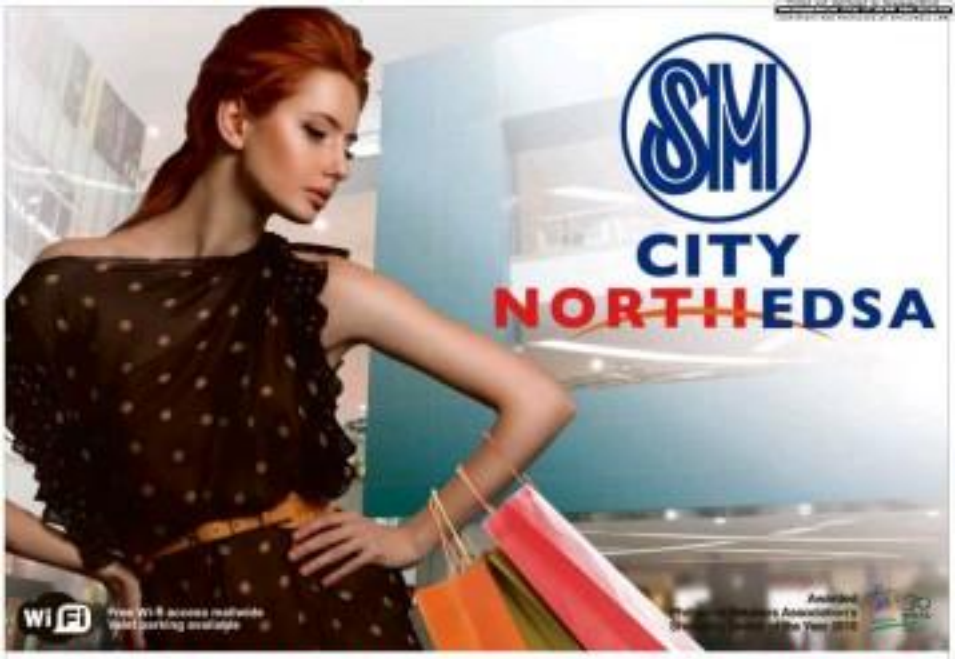
WORLDBRIEFS

Upheaval could spread to Syria, say analysts

DAMASCUS—The wave of pro-democracy protests engulfing the Arab world could spread to Syria, where the Baath party has been in power for almost half a century, according to analysts. "Social pressure in the country is immense. Pulse-rate-inducing opposition movements have existed for many years. They feel aggrieved by absolute power and lack of democracy," said Rime Allaf of the Institute for the Near East and Gulf Military Analysis. "The popular trend is gaining ground by taking over media like the internet, Facebook, Twitter, iPod, inspiring neighbor-to-neighbor," he said. Syrians in recent days turned to Facebook, which is officially banned but can be accessed through proxies, to call for "a day of anger" on Friday after Wednesday prayers. AFP

1,200 possible planets orbiting other stars

Astronomers have cracked the Milky Way like a potato, and pundits are now pouring out so fast that they do not know what to do with them all. In a long-awaited announcement, scientists operating Nasa's Kepler planet-hunting satellite reported on Wednesday that they had identified 1,235 possible planets orbiting other stars, potentially tripling the number of known planets. Of the new candidates, 68 are 1.1 to 2 times the size of Earth. Of 54 candidates—smaller than any previously discovered planets outside the solar system. Fifty-four of these possible exoplanets are in the so-called habitable zones of their systems, and cooler than the sun, where temperatures should be moderate enough for liquid water. Four of these are also thought to be the size of Earth, and seven resemble Earth. Astronomers said that it would take years to confirm that all of these candidates are really planets—by using ground-based telescopes to measure their masses, for example, or inspecting them to see if background stars are eclipsed or refracted. *New York Times News Service*



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WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Pacers send Cavs to 22nd defeat /A28

SPORTS

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SAN Miguel's Jay Washington (left) blocks an attempt by Talk 'N Text's Ranidel De Ocampo in Game 5.

Tropang Texters eye title clincher tonight

By Marvin B. Castillo

FORTY-EIGHT minutes away.

That's what separates Talk 'N Text Tropang Texters from the victory that they will try to complete today over the San Miguel Beermen in Game 6 of the PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

"Tonight was the first half," Talk 'N Text coach Chot Reyes told reporters Wednesday after the 12-point Game 5 win that gave them a 3-2 edge in the best-of-seven series for the season opening conference crown.

"We came into this contest ready to play 96 hard minutes. We are halfway there and we need to find a way to put together another good 48 minutes on Friday."

San Miguel gave rises the 7 p.m. match the dreaded underdog. But the Beermen simply cannot be counted out, having come back from 0-2 to tie the series with back-to-back wins before the Tenorsan loss.

"It's not yet the end of the world," SMB coach Ato Agustin said. "They still need one more [win]. Like in our first two games, we were down 0-2, we bounced back and won two straight. We were able to do that, then we can still do it again."

If the Beermen prevail, the rubber match will be played on Sunday.

San Miguel takes comfort in the fact that the Texters have lost four of the last six best-of-seven series in which they held a 3-2 lead.

And in the last three PBA Finals, and in four of the last five, the team that won Game 5 did run into the championship.

The way the Texters played Game 5, however, showed they are ready to go all the way.

Talk 'N Text erased a 13-point deficit in the second quarter and was ahead by eight entering the third, when the Tenors turned up the heat some more to post a hard-fought 90-78 win in 2?.

It was such a crushing defeat for San Miguel, which came into the classic as the odds-on pick after taking the previous two.

Even Agustin didn't know what hit his team.

"We are sure that we were outhustled and outworked and it clearly showed that they [Texters] wanted it more today," Agustin, in his usual soft tone, told reporters in Filipino. "The result [final score] showed it."

Troy Rosario Alaping, who came off the bench Wednesday and almost posted a triple double, was the biggest difference for the Texters in Game 5.

Jay Washington and Arwind Santos would have to pick it up for the Beermen, whose tandem of 66-something players is, without a doubt, starting to feel the sense and tone of this bruising series.

Danny Ildefonso was limited to just seven points in 25 minutes, Dorian Peña to four in 14 and Chris Ross to zilch in 12 after the trio had come from great efforts in Game 4.

Jason Castro and Alaping, together with Ryan Reyes, are leading a stunning Talk 'N Text game that is taking the mug out of San Miguel.

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Dalupan, Padilla PSA awardees

By Cedrik F Tupas

A BASKETBALL coach whose achievements have remained unrivaled and an international boxing referee who was in the middle of the ring in the most high-profile fight held in the country will be on the honor roll on the Philippine Sportswriters Association-Coca Cola Annual Awards night on March 3.

Legendary mentor Virgilio "Baby" Dalupan and ring official Carlos Padilla Jr. will be awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the country's oldest media organization, which is honoring the top athletes and sportsmen for 2010, at the Manila Hotel.

World No. 1 billiards player Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Asian Games gold medalists Ivy Sabullo, Jerome Gwodda and Kilroy Rivera will share the Athlete of the Year honor in the awards night also presented by Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), Accel, Harbour Centre and Nihao Mineral Resources International Inc.

Known as "The Maestro" for his masterful coaching, Dalupan, 87, has set the standard for basketball hutch tacticians in the country.

Dalupan played the fabled Crispa Redmanizers' way to a first grand slam in the Philippine Basketball Association and remains the undisputed mentor in PBA history with 21 titles, prompting the PBA Press Corps to name its Coach of the Year award after him.

He scored in the college game also remains unmatched with 22 MVP titles, including seven straight, during his time at the University of the East. He also showed his class inside Araneta in two NCAA titles.

Padilla, whose family is involved in show business, found fame for his career per fair-way of boxing refereeing.

The highlight of Padilla's career was his officiating of the "Thrilla in Manila" heavyweight title fight between boxing legends Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier at the Araneta Coliseum in 1975.

The formal showdowns has been considered one of the fights of the century.

Padilla did well as a late replacement after Frazier's trainer, the late great Eddie Futch, objected to all three American referees earlier chosen for the match.

Padilla continued his officiate high profile fights in a career that spanned two decades, including bouts involving Sugar Ray Leonard and Wilfredo Benitez, Mike Tyson and Pinklon Thomas, Leonard and Roberto Duran, Duran versus Thomas Hearns and Salvador Sanchez opponent Wilfredo Gomez among others.

DALUPAN: Set the standard for PH coaches

Azkals' striker vows two goals

By Cedrik F Tupas

MONGOLIA HAS yet to arrive in Bacolod, but Philippine team striker Phil Younghusband has already upped the ante in their Challenge Cup qualifying clash on Feb. 9.

The Azkals' top scorer yesterday said he expects to put at least two goals past the Mongolians in his return to the Panaad Stadium, where he has scored half of his 13 career-level goals.

"I expect to score at least two goals in the game," the 23-year-old Younghusband, who also has four goals in the Under-23 and Under-23 levels, told the reporters. "I have a mission for myself. If I don't (score two goals), I will be disappointed."

Younghusband scored twice in a 6-4 draw with the Nepean select in a friendly match last Monday, but the former reserve player of the Durham FC in England said it is not the perfect gauge of the team's progress.

"It's difficult to judge the team's form when games right now are more about giving players a chance to see what they can do," said Younghusband, who was sidelined by a hamstring problem during yesterday's training match against a Bacolod side fanned in Biadla.

"Objects will arrive a few days before games play and the coaches will put in the proper line-up to know the whole team is prepare."

PSC: Renovating Rizal Memorial pitch practical

GARCIA: We're now realistic

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE SPORTS Commission chair Ritchie Garcia yesterday thumbed down the idea of building a new football stadium and instead pushed for renovating the 77-year-old Rizal Memorial football field.

Garcia said lack of funding is the prime concern for the decision and added that repairs have started at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (RMSC) field including the installation of new lighting.

"I really don't have the figure yet how much it would cost to build a new one but renovation will surely cost much less than building a new one," said Garcia.

He declined to say how much the PSC is spending for repairs but said in a radio show that the field will be ready in two months.

The call for a new stadium that could accommodate thousands of spectators began late last year when the Philippine football team, known as the Azkals, made the semi-finals of the prestigious Suzuki Cup.

However, Garcia said the RMSC will have problem with parking especially when it hosts an Azkals match.

"I would still push for improving the one in Negros (Bernard Scolfield) and other cities outside Manila," added Garcia.

At present, RMSC can only seat 2,000 while Panaad can accommodate 10,000 spectators.

St. Francis, PCCr begin UCLAA duel

ABBEY TUBIO (San Jacinto Gym)
TOLO — PTPI vs DE LOS PEARL
11:20 a.m. — UPC vs ZOBEL
1 p.m. — BPM vs BOOK (for Pearl)

ST. FRANCIS of Assisi College and Philippine College of Criminology clash today in Game 1 of their best-of-three championship for the 2nd UCLAA crown at the San Andres gym.

Sometime at 1 p.m. following the 11:30 a.m. encounter for third place between Las Piñas College and Dr. Olympio Memorial College.

Kicking off their separate senior division championship series, meanwhile, are PCCr and University of the East at 10 a.m.

St. Francis banged into the finals after burying Col'del in the semifinals, 87-76.

PCCR clobbered Las Piñas, 89-76, in the other Final Four match.

Philippine College of Criminology (Basketball)
Box Score
PCCR (89) — Dano-Quiroz 30, Sabo 10, Ong 10, Ramos 7, Lozano 10, Dandoy 2, Sabio 2, Tubig 3, Ramos 2

Southern Ladies: Agojo 3 up on Ikeda, Ababa

AGOJO: I hope to keep this up.

BACOLOD—Jervie Agojo surged to a three-point lead over reigning Philippine Ladies Amateur Open champion Gillian Ikeda and fourth alcalde at the start of the Southern Ladies golf tournament yesterday at the Hacienda course of the Bacolod Golf and Country Club here.

Agojo fanned down three birdies against a three-putt bogey to finish with 36 points under the Modano scoring system and join the 54-hole tournament organized and conducted by the National Golf Association of the Philippines.

"I'm happy to be in the lead," said Agojo, who swept three major titles, including the Philippine Ladies Open, to highlight victories last year in 2005. "I haven't been winning lately, so I hope to keep this up."

Ikeda carded a careful round of one-over-par 73, worth 33 points, the reigning Mindanao amateur titlist Ababa, alcalde with Andie Gasco, The lone amateur in last week's The Country Club International, rebounded a 72 and stood four points behind with 32, in a tie with Carolyn Gaugasa.

Agojo, the former Pepperdine University ace who is coming off a long layoff due to motherhood, said she needs solid demanding in the next 36 holes.

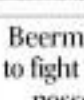
"I need to maintain a one- or two-under card to win here," said Agojo, who also won this event and the DW Open titles in 2005.

Debbie Arellano, who signed Birdie with a double bogey finish to win last year's crown in Iloilo, posted for fourth and posted 38 points from a 74 in the tournament backed by the Philippine Sports Commission, Rainer International, Sherwoods Philo Corp, Yellow Pages, Hotel Renaissance Ayenda, PANTALLEY, DHL Express and Business Inn.

Stanislaus Bonaquel fashioned round 70 points while Kitchie Lucsara and Pamela Marinas turned in identical 68 points. Cora Golez had 67 points and Eva Miranda and Gaby Mendoza each 65 and 63, respectively.

Alexandra Ababa, chasing an unprecedented fifth straight title, is tied at 32 with Arellano, Gasco, Ikeda, Gaugasa, Lucsara and Bonaquel.

Beermen need to fight for every possession



ONE GAME AT A TIME

Ato Ara Khachikian

THE RAMBLE began slow and unassuming, and then blazed hot and unforgiving.

After a shaky opening quarter, Talk 'N Text surged a masterful comeback after losing two straight games to like Game 1 and move a step closer to the Philippine Cup title.

Ato Miguel was nowhere like the team that came together in Games 3 and 4 and regained the momentum of the series. Now the Tropang Texters had momentum such could be celebrating after Game 6.

Again, when Talk 'N Text lost all its game standing, it is a difficult team to stop. We cannot hope into a false sense of security when you think you have the game under control.

San Miguel managed to contain Talk 'N Text to Games 3 and 4 by not allowing Chot Reyes' cores any real opportunity to get their calmes in the air and sweeping them on the hapless Beermen.

The story was different last Wednesday.

Jimmy Alapag spearheaded the onslaught as his double-double of 16 points and 10 assists fueled the TNT sweep. On every fastbreak opportunity, TNT ran and filled the lanes with lethal strike. TNT outscored San Miguel on the break, 31-7, and had 18 points off San Miguel's turnovers.

One critical factor that played second to totally break down San Miguel: a three-on-two with two fighting quick passers and then a final dish by Jeffrey Cruz to the trailing Rosidel de Ocampo, who scored uncontested at close range.

Even when the outcome was almost sure, Talk 'N Text did not pull out all its main gunners and kept up its high-octane game.

In the fourth quarter, Larry Fonacier's three triples snapped whatever lifeline the Beermen were holding on to. The unceasing pace tried to small cut everything away from the Beermen, even a glint of hope that they would force a final showdown on Sunday.

Buoyed by how close a possible win is, and not wanting to give the Beermen any more life rafters or subs to find them out anew, it can be expected that the Tropang Texters will continue to wrong islands until they run out of gas.

The Beermen will therefore need two things: a number one will demand a Game 7 and a strategy that will snatch and scrape for every possession.

The mind game that San Miguel must win a to make TNT think that it cannot close it out tonight. Go every possession, the Beermen must be unrelenting in defense to score and take the ball away when TNT has it. Every rebound should be valuable to the Beermen.

It is a juggernaut task given how pumped up TNT will be, but it will become it if San Miguel will still have a chance to prolong the series.

Survival is again at stake for the Beermen. But this time there will be no more games to save them if the Texters close it out with one more merciless salvo.

SHAME MOSLEY: Manny Pacquiao is very hittable. I can get his lights out.

Pacman 'very hittable' foe

Mosley shuns Manny's speed

By Ray Loarca

MANNY PACQUIAO'S slick footwork and lateral movements might pose little concern for Shane Mosley when they tangle for the World Boxing Organization welterweight crown on May 7 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The American challenger believes he can always find an opening to catch the Filipino pound-for-pound king.

And if he does, Mosley says the Filipino pound-for-pound king will be in real trouble.

"Pacquiao is very hittable and that's the problem he has with me because I can put his lights out," Mosley told Vivek Wallace of Fightchips.com Wednesday.

Mosley's optimism stemmed from the way Pacquiao fought and beat a bigger but slower Antonio Margarito last Nov. 13 in Arlington, Texas, to clinch the 147-pound title.

Though Pacquiao dominated Margarito most time, the Mexican was able to mount a few solid punches, including two body hooks that sent he ace out of the 10-spins in the ninth round.

"I am at least three times faster than either guys, as if Margarito was much less, I was much faster than," said Mosley.

The 39-year-old Mosley, a three-time world champion, should know.

He stopped Margarito in the ninth round when they fought in 2009.

And Mosley's opponents have reached Margarito and his rung. But that feat and only eight of them, overall champion, took it for all its worth.

According to Pacquiao in his Thursday column Wednesday, he and his handlers will work hard during training camp to find ways on how to counter whatever Mosley is going to throw at him come fight night at the MGM Grand.

"We will try to get familiar with his (Mosley's) past fights and see how best to hurt him this time," said Pacquiao.

167 teams tee it up in PAL Interclub Feb. 16

By Manuel B. Cotoño

NORTHERN MINDANAO will host the Philippine Airlines Interclub golf championship for just the fourth time when the country's most prestigious amateur team event tees off Feb. 16 to a pair of challenging courses.

Del Monte in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, and Pueblo de Oro in Cagayan de Oro will be the sites of this year's tournament, dubbed "The Best It Can," where a record 167 teams will see action in the hunt for bragging rights and titles.

Upside will debut in Senior's event, while Condalong joins for an unprecedented ninth straight Men's title.

Eight new teams from Las Vegas, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Honolulu, Vancouver, Dumra, Jamia and Tokyo will be debuting this event.

The Seniors event is slated on Feb. 16 to 20 with the Men's division, where at least 70 teams have already signed up, scheduled Feb. 23 to 26.

Del Monte is the clubhouse to the Men's event, with the two-lined layout proving to be a tough hurdle in the past few years. DML Express and Business Inn.

Stanislaus Bonaquel fashioned round 70 points while Kitchie Lucsara and Pamela Marinas turned in identical 68 points. Cora Golez had 67 points and Eva Miranda and Gaby Mendoza each 65 and 63, respectively.

Alexandra Ababa, chasing an unprecedented fifth straight title, is tied at 32 with Arellano, Gasco, Ikeda, Gaugasa, Lucsara and Bonaquel.

Reyes clinches KF Cup overall crown

FRANCO: Victor Peter Reyes shows his trophies after whenever you.

PASSING HIS nearest rivals to move up the next level, Francis Victor Peter Reyes, came through with a sterling performance in the Pagcor EP Cup Series in Karting in Subic recently.

Showing skills beyond his years, the 14-year-old Reyes collected six trophies in six races in the last race of the 2010 EP Cup Series at Rent Escaper of the Clark International Speedway and the opening of 2011 Series at the Next Gen.

The Ateneo high school sophomore registered podium finishes in Rotax 7 and 8 to capture the 2010 overall title in the KF3 Junior class series featuring Jairo Calderon and Esteban Rivera of Peru-Chinang.

The victory in the KF3 series as well as his second place overall standing in the ROK series boosted Reyes' chances of making the Junior Roster of the four-title.

Reyes is leaving the KF3 series for the tougher KF2 senior class this season.

Reyes wrested up second victory all in his first race in the KF2. What made the feat more impressive was the strong field in the senior race that included Hideo Shiroki, Mathe Buchinger and SJ Saba.

"It was so inspiring to be at the top of the podium," said Reyes, who are understudied by the country's premiere racing drivers," Reyes said.

Reyes bested Saba of Peru-2 Racing to win Race 1, before finishing third in the 11-lap Road behind Saba and Shiroki.

The next two races in the EP series are set at the Carmona Circuit on Feb. 19 and 20. Racing entries from Japan and Indonesia are coming in late in the race.

Coach P.E Sapon

SPORTSWATCH

PCSO beach volley Saturday

QUEZON CITY—Former women's volleyball standouts Rachel Anne Daquis and Aby Marano will headline the Philippine Collegiate Champions League's (PCCL) Invitational Beach Volleyball Tournament at the Quezon City Sports Club this Saturday.

Daquis and Marano will be joined by Ateneo's Alyssa Valdez and Kim Fajardo, Adamson's Jovelyn Gonzaga and Jessica Gamit, Lyceum's Jennifer Nierva and Jennifer Aguilar, Arellano

SPORTS

Winter storm affecting Super Bowl preparations

DALLAS—Super Bowl in the "Big D" has turned into the Big Chill, with sleet, snow and bitter cold threatening to disrupt America's biggest party.

Hammered by a monster winter storm that barreled across much of the United States, North Texas felt a bit more like the North Pole, with power outages paralyzing much of Dallas.

While the cold was keeping the Super Bowl party from heating up, the NFL said there were no major issues or preparations for Sunday's title game between the Green Bay Packers and Pittsburgh Steelers remained on schedule.

"Some hotels have experienced or expected but brief blackouts this morning and we have been in contact with the public utility commission," NFL spokesperson Brian McCarthy told Reuters on Wednesday. "We don't see any indication of impact."

The only event affected was Rain Day at the NFL Experience interactive theme park, which had to be cancelled due to area schools being closed for a second straight day.

The miserable conditions also forced the Steelers and Packers to move Wednesday's practice sessions indoors.

"We call this Steelers weather and I love that," said Pittsburgh defensive end Brett Keisel. "It is a sheet of ice everywhere you go, (hopefully the Steelers will bring us more here."

With the winter blast, the Super Bowl party has been slow to heat up.

Dallas awoke to widespread power outages on Wednesday that knocked out traffic lights and crippled traffic in and around the downtown area, which will be Super Bowl party central.

Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, the world's third busiest airport, was returning to normal operations after being closed on Tuesday for the first time since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks because of the icy conditions. Reuters

PACKERS linebacker Clay Matthews (52) stretches with teammates during practice.

Ex-NBA star sees London league soon

LONDON—NBA great Clyde Drexler can become a league franchise owner based in London, maybe even in the next decade.

"Clyde the Glide," in the British capital to help promote the first regular-season NBA games to be played in London in March, said Wednesday that basketball has grown itself in Europe and expansion to the continent may just be a matter of time.

"Eventually, if the demand continues, that could actually happen," Drexler told The Associated Press. "We're probably 10 years or so away, but that is not too farsighted to say yet."

The NBA has played preseason games in London for the past four years, pushing hard into the O2 Arena. Late last year, the league doubled it's time lines to emulate the WSC and NFL, hosts of whom have played regular season games in London.

The Toronto Raptors and New Jersey Nets will play a pair of games at the O2 on March 4 and 5.

"Basketball is a global sport," said Drexler, who spent more than a decade playing for the Portland Trail Blazers. "There's a demand around the world, and David Stern (commissioner) is trying to facilitate that demand."

And the distance won't be a problem.

"Four games coming from Oregon to New York are far, but that never stopped anything," Drexler said. "It's about as far as Nets fish to London. It's all relative. Every team has a private charter. They can go all over the world." AP

HOUSTON'S Dwight Howard (44) and Utah's Paul Millsap (24) vie for a rebound.

Pacers send Cavs to 22nd defeat

CLEVELAND—Cleveland's losing streak reached 22 games...one short of the NBA's single-season record—as Danny Granger scored 23 points and Lance Stephenson added 22 to lead the Indiana Pacers to a 117-112 win over the Cavaliers.

Unless they can win on Friday in Memphis, the Cavs (8-41) will match the league's all-time mark for consecutive futility, a record shared by the 1981-82 expansion Vancouver Grizzlies and 1993-94 Denver Nuggets.

Kyrie Irving scored 25 points and nemesis Jermaine had 24 for Cleveland.

In Oklahoma City Kevin Durant continued a scoring run with 41 points and 16 rebounds and led a key fourth quarter run as Oklahoma City beat New Orleans, 119-93.

Durant collected 41 points for the third time in four games, and he and the NBA with the 41 point games this season.

Jared Sloan had 28 points and 15 rebounds and Chris Paul scored 15 points for New Orleans, which has lost three of four following a 10 game winning streak.

At New York, Jack Iverson had 29 points and 11 rebounds, and Dallas took control in the third quarter before beating New York, 113-97, for its ninth straight win.

Jose Barea added 22 points and Tyson Chandler had 15 points and 15 boards for the Mavericks, who outscored the Knicks 26-6 to open the second half and went on to their fifth consecutive win. AP

This one wasn't as dominant as the Mavs' 128-76 rout on Jan. 24, 2013, their most lopsided win ever and the Knicks' worst loss at home, but Dallas was just as impressive in the first 7½ minutes of the third quarter en route to its 14th win in the past 15 meetings overall.

Dando Collinsett scored 27 points and Antonio Hoopkins finished with 24, but missed all five shots in the second half before leaving for good as the Bucks were deep into their break.

At Minneapolis, Rudy Gay had 22 points, seven assists and seven rebounds, and Zach Randolph added 21 points and 13 rebounds as Memphis cruised to a 106-86 victory.

Sam Young scored 19 points and the Grizzlies dominated the league's best rebounding team on the boards, 47-36, to win their fourth straight game.

Michael Beasley scored 19 points for the Timberwolves and Kevin Love had just 10 points and 10 rebounds, narrowly getting his 58th straight double-double.

At Auburn Hills, Michigan, Stephen Jackson scored a season-high 30 points as Charlotte beat Detroit, 87-83.

Norman Powell drew Norman Brown added 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Bobcats, who snapped a two-game losing streak.

Detroit, which lost its fourth in a row, was missing Rodney Stuckey (shoulder) and Jason Maxiell (back). Ben Gordon led the Pistons with 20 points and Rayshaun Prince added 16.

At Newark, New Jersey Lou Williams scored 20 points and Jrue Holiday had 11 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds for his first career triple-double to lead Philadelphia over New Jersey, 106-93. AP

SEE ALSO page 21

SHIN: A surprise pair

Korea's Shin Aussie Open co-leader

MELBOURNE—South Korea's Jiyai Shin, playing her first event of the year, shot a 6-under par 67 on Thursday to take a share of the first-round lead at the Women's Australian Open.

American Jennifer Song was level with Shin at Commonwealth Golf Club. Sohyun Coakley of Ireland was in third place with a 68, while two golfers were tied for fourth with 69: Australian Nikki Campbell, Kim Ji-soo and Kim Hee-ji of South Korea, Anne-Lise Caudal of France and Becky Morgan of Scotland.

Former Australian Open champion Lorena Ochoa of England shot 71 and Australia's Karrie Webb 72.

"I changed my swing a little bit last month, I changed the tempo," Shin said. "I had confidence but I was a little bit nervous too. But when I played the first hole with good hitting, good contact. After that I just trusted myself."

Shin has finished second in Asian tournaments but never won. AP

Peping's 2 options to end cycling row

By Jam Manano

LEYTE'S SHAME the cycling insurgent triumph an election or seek refuge with the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Olympic chief Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. yesterday suggested these options to finally end the cycling struggle in two Congressional districts in Leyte City Mayor Alfredo Romualdez and former Philippine Sports Commission chair Philip Ella Juico, who have been battling for leadership in the sport, should sit down and agree to an election.

The Philippine Olympic Committee president suggested that both parties should appoint a three-man committee to figure out the authentic list of voting members.

"If they cannot agree on that, I suggest they go straight to the CAS," said Cojuangco.

Based in Lausanne, Switzerland, the CAS is an international arbitration body set up by the International Olympic Committee to settle disputes in sports.

All disputes mediated by the CAS, officials was formed by the IOC in 1984, are considered final and executory.

"Both of them (Romualdez and Juico) belong to a level of society which should bring harmony," said Cojuangco.

He also proposed that a trials facilitated by the POC to identify the best riders from each group be held and bring them under the care of the Olympic body.

With the two camps, Cojuangco said an agreement should be signed by both camps with concurrence from the Union Cycliste Internationale, the world governing body for the sport.

"At least, we will get the assurance that the athletes will compete in the coming SEA Games," said Cojuangco.

Norma Alas interment tomorrow

THE INTERMENT of Marina Peace Alas, mother of Philippine Veteran, Lotran and money-time national coach Louie Alas, will be held tomorrow at 2 p.m. at Heaven's Garden.

She passed away on Sunday night. She was 80.

He is survived by children Carlotta Sta. Rita Luis, Josefina, Angelie, Ma. Rebbie, Amador, Francisco Luis and Carmelo.

FEMALE participants of the Meta-fit exercise demo and a few more sit-ups.

Run Against Time participants hurdle Meta-fit run, workouts

EIGHT HOPS and runners once again put their stamina to the test in the fourth leg of the Summit Run Against Time held recently at Residencia High Street in Taguig.

The activity, which helped participants determine their true physical age, was supervised by coach Jim Saint who designed a one-kilometer Meta-Fit run composed of five stations.

Meta-Fit Run is a combination of running and short but intense workouts that have been scientifically proven to help the body reduce the growth hormone contraction.

According to experts, somatotropin is needed to combat the effects of somatopause, the weight gain and metabolism slowdown stage that typically happens when one is in his late 20s and 30s.

Each station had an assigned fitness routine—single leg squats, push-ups, squats, burpees. Drill-body exercises similar to a squat thrust and lunges.

Beginners completed 10 repetitions of each exercise, while those in the advanced category had to accomplish twice that.

Aamil Ramos, 17, topped the male category of the 30to39 run while 20-year old Desiree Alcantara was the female winner.

Cyril Bhargava, 35 years old but whose physical age was pegged at 20, topped the 30to39 challenge along with 23-year-old 10K runner Reggie Nagal, whose physical age was measured at 25.

In the Meta-Fit challenge, volunteers called out as many repetitions as they can of each station for a minute. Their performance was then measured to determine the difference between their real age and physical age.

"Meta-Fit exercises really helps you improve your physical fitness as you actually perform better than what your actual age suggests," said Mangay who, along with the other winners, received a limited edition "Defying Aging" singlet and gift certificates.

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Editor Raoul B. Marcelo ● Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mahinay

BUSINESS

6%+

Regulator tightens watch on pawnshops

BSP aims to stem laundering activities

By Michelle V. Ramos

CITING THE proliferation of pawnshops across the country, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has issued a circular amending and tightening existing regulations governing small lenders.

The central bank issued Circular 711 on amendment of a previous measure, stressing the need for officers and employees of pawnshops to undergo training on the BSP's regulations and anti-money laundering efforts.

Because the number of pawnshops has been growing by leaps and bounds, money launderers may exploit these channels to transmit and legitimize illegal cash under the noses of authorities, the regulator said.

Through money laundering, criminals can make it appear that their dirty money came from legitimate sources.

Since many pawnshops are now into the business of facilitating remittances, regulators said they should also be required to report to authorities suspicious transactions, such as sending and receiving cash from different sources.

Circular 711 likewise states that assets of pawnshops and items repossessed by borrowers in collateral for loans must be insured by companies accredited by the Insurance Commission.

This is to protect the public against loss of pawned items resulting from theft and fire.

All pawned items, "except those which are kept inside the vault or safe, must be insured against fire," the BSP said.

In the circular, the BSP has also identified people that should not be designated as directors or officers of pawnshops.

These include malefactors convicted of offenses like estafa, embezzlement, extortion, forgery, swindling, theft, robbery, and violations of graft and corrupt practices, among others.

The BSP also prohibits persons found to have violated banking laws or other regulations enforced by other regulatory agencies from being directors of pawnshops.

The pawnshop industry in the country has grown and developed over the years. Apart from lending, most shops now offer other services such as bills payment and facilitation of remittances.

These services have paved to be lucrative for pawnshop operators.

The BSP said enhanced monitoring of pawnshops would be necessary given the phenomenal growth of the industry.

Shares drop

SHARE PRICES yesterday closed mixed to modestly positive gains on resuming interest in export.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index lost 2.52 points, or 0.04% to 5,888.55, reversing the last trading on Wall Street sole right. Investors were once again affected by rising tensions in the Middle East as clashes between anti- and pro-government protesters erupted in Egypt.

The index was weighed down by the previous and trading losses, while gains were seen in the financial and property counters.

Value for more than P5.46 billion as

SHARES /B1

VIKING! Barangay ati-ba Philippine Stock Exchange head-over a show to performers of the traditional Ati-Atihan dance on the trading floor in Makati City

Massive deployment of solar plants seen

By Amy R. Remo

LOCAL SOLAR power producers are just waiting for need basis regulators before they undertake massive construction of generating facilities that may provide the three main grids with an additional 500 megawatts over the next three years.

According to Philippine Solar Power Association (PSPA) president Jose Tirso C. Cruz Cupellan, member of the solar power industry plan to generate a combined 125 MW this year, 150 MW in 2012, and another 95 MW by 2013.

Depending on the capacity of a facility, investments in solar power plant may range from $3.75 per watt (or $3.7 million per MW) to as high as $4.00 per watt. Based on economies of scale, a smaller facility will require a bigger investment, Cupellan explained.

Industry leader told reporters that the PSPA is optimistic that the feed-in-tariff (FIT) rates will be issued within the first half of the year, after the National Renewable Energy Board announced that it would recommended to regulators the approval of FIT rates no later than March 31.

"Given the 90-day review period of our regulators, the industry is optimistic that the FIT will be in place no later than June 30," Cupellan said. "Having said this, we anticipate massive deployment of solar power in 2011. Solar energy is the only renewable energy technology capable of deploying (power) plants in less than a year."

FIT rates determine the economic and financial viability of renewable energy projects.

Under the feed-in-tariff system, developers are assured of future cash flows, as electricity end-users will be charged fixed amounts to cover production of energy from renewable sources. With this in place, utilities may spread the cost of clean power over many customers.

While investors are waiting for the issuance of FIT rates, most solar power producers are already preparing and constructing their respective plants, Cupellan said. "Some that have already put up

READING /B-1

Revenue men train guns on professionals

By Bancel W. Dumlao

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has set its sights on professionals, subjecting them to an audit and determine whether they paid the correct amount of taxes in 2010.

In an order dated Feb. 2, Revenue Commissioner Kim S. Henares told lawyers, doctors, engineers, accountants, and other taxpayers who rendered professional services would be the first on the list to be audited.

Revenue Memorandum Order No. 1-2011 states that the initiative is meant to enhance taxpayers' voluntary compliance by encouraging payment of the correct amount of taxes.

While professionals are the primary targets, those who are less likely to be audited are taxpayers subject to an income tax rate of 10 percent, Henares said.

Also under the "last priority" audit list are taxpayers who are subject to value-added tax rates of 2 percent for holders of goods, and 4 percent for service providers.

An exception to the "last priority" status are taxpayers categorized of manufacturing sales or revenues, Henares said.

Earlier this week, Henares said the BIR expected its full-year collection to grow by at least 14 percent from the P822 billion raised in 2010.

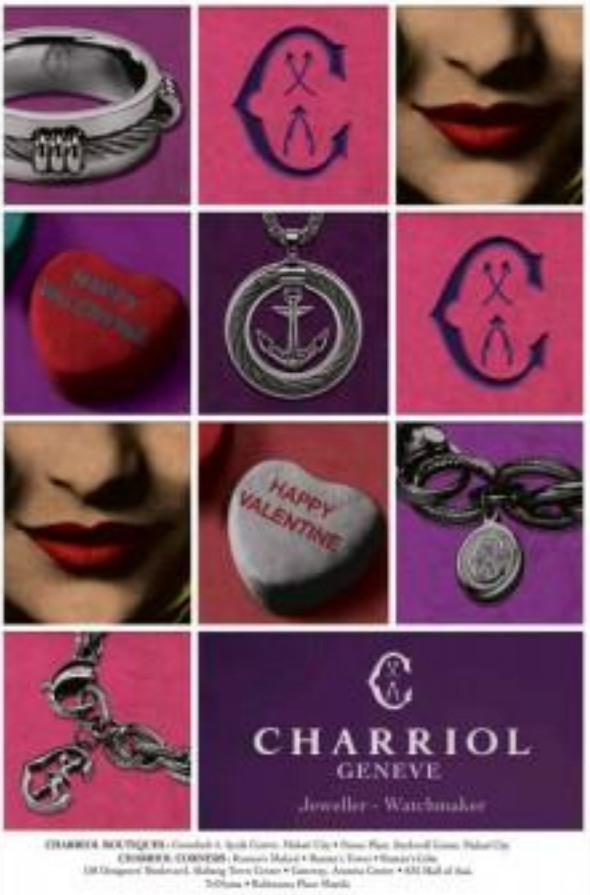
The 2010 yield represented an increase of 9.6 percent from the P751.2-billion collection in 2009, but it was 4.6 percent short of the P860-billion target.

According to the Department of Finance, the BIR's parent agency, the bureau is supposed to raise P940 billion in 2011.

Preliminary data from the DoF show that the government might have incurred a budget deficit of P330.4 billion in 2010, about P39 billion less than expected.

Revenue totaled P1.209 trillion, growing by 7.7 percent from the P1.122 trillion raised in 2009.

However, the amount is P65.2 billion, or 6.6 percent, short of the P1.294-trillion target revenue for 2010.



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SM Group putting up 2nd office building in MOA

SMIC selling 5-yr debt notes

TYCOON HENRY Sy's SM Investments Corp. is raising up to P7 billion in fresh funds from the sale of five-year debt papers to selected institutional investors.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, SMIC announced that it would issue up to P7 billion worth of five-year corporate notes.

The coupon rate fixed at 80 basis points above benchmark money market rates and would be available via private placement to investment banks.

Unlike retail bonds, which are offered through a public offering and must go through a more tedious regulatory approval process, corporate notes are a quicker fund-raising option for top-tier corporations as they are sold to no more than 19 selected institutional investors.

"The issue is part of SM's debt management strategies to most of the proceeds will be used to refinance an existing liability worth about P4.3 billion, which will mature in 2012. The balance will be used for other corporate requirements," SMIC said. Patricia Evangelista

Designed to suit needs of BPOs

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE SM GROUP is investing in a second office building in the bid of Asia complex to cater to business process outsourcing (BPO) firms.

Final confirmed, the second to a series of four office buildings strategically located within the MOA, will be built by SM Investments Corp.'s sister property unit SM Land.

The new building will have about 68,000 square meters of office and retail space and will be fully operational by the first quarter of 2013.

SMIC disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Thursday that the new building, designed by world-renowned architectural firm Aedas Architects, would have a unique mass-core design interconnected to its adjacent structures at first to the Philippines. It will also be connected to the SM Mall of Asia.

The fourth level will contain a podium with lush greenery and landscaping, at level-sharing and retail areas, along with additional office spaces. This will be accessible from the ground level through ramps and escalators and entrances. More retail areas will likewise be available at the ground floor, the company said in the disclosure.

The building was designed to "suit the needs of business process outsourcing companies and their employees that require highly specialized technological support systems and lifestyle services that cater to a 24/7 work mode."

SM's E-com buildings are strategically located within a complex that is just a few minutes away from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and from major airports north and south. Besides, they are also highly accessible to mass transport systems such as the LRT and MRT, and buses plying EDSA.

The first office building in MOA, Data Center, was launched in 2007 and is more 98 percent occupied by anchor tenants BPO firms ACS, ITE, and Legacy, shipping firm Maersk and American President Lines (APL), and maritime staffing firm BSP Co. and GETI Group.

Status of corporate officers

BY THEIR status-conscious society of peers, the rank or title of "corporate officer" is a source of pride within the employee ranks.

It is said, anybody who desires his appointment from the board of directors to be considered a corporate officer. He is usually given certain benefits that are not enjoyed by those not similarly situated.

There is a trade-off though for such privileges. The right to hold that position rests entirely on the goodwill of the board.

If the board loses its confidence on a corporate officer, all it has to do is not reserve his appointment at the annual stockholders' meeting, or if it cannot wait for that event, dismiss him on the ground of lack of confidence.

Of course, he can opt to resort to court the board's action. But chances of getting it favorable decision are not very because our courts, absent grave abuse of discretion, tend to render doubts in favor of management out of respect for its business judgment.

This is where non-corporate officers (or rank and file employees) enjoy an advantage. They can be dismissed only for causes stated in the Labor Code and after due notice and hearing.

What's more, all doubts in a case pleaded for illegal dismissal are resolved in the employee's favor, and the labor arbiter hearing the case is not obliged to observe strict rules of evidence.

Grievances

The question of who is a corporate officer for purposes of determining the proper venue to resolve complaints for illegal dismissal is the subject of a recent decision by the Supreme Court.

The case of Sterling Industrial and Commercial Corp. vs. Ricardo Cano (GR No. 157960, Oct. 13, 2010) involves the dismissal of Cano who held the position of vice president for finance and administration of the company. He was at the same time a member of the board of directors.

Cano filed a complaint for illegal dismissal with the labor arbiter. The company sought the dismissal of the case on the ground that, since he is a corporate officer and director, his case must be heard by the intra-corporate dispute arbitral, or that case, now under the jurisdiction of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

In 2000, the Securities Regulation Code transferred the power to resolve such disputes from the SEC to the regular courts.)

The labor arbiter, National Labor Relations Commission and Court of Appeals denied the company's plea and ruled that Cano is not a corporate officer and therefore the case falls within the labor arbiter's jurisdiction.

Enforced by the rebuff, the company elevated the matter to the tribunal for final resolution.

Appointment

The principal basis of commercial law whether Cano' position as vice president is a corporate office. If it were, jurisdiction over his case lies with the courts; otherwise, it should be resolved by the labor arbiter.

The complaint argued that Cano was appointed to his position by its president pursuant to the authority given to him by the board of directors duly by-laws.

On the basis of this grant of power, it was as if Cano was directly appointed by the board, thus making him a corporate officer.

Cano countered that inasmuch as his position does not appear in the company's by-laws and he was not duly appointed by the board, he should be classified as an ordinary or non-corporate officer.

Granted to the issue is Section 25 of the Corporation Code which states that "immediately after their election, the directors of a corporation must formally organize by the election of a president, ... a treasurer, ... a secretary ... and such other officers as may be provided for in the by-laws."

The tribunal stated that for a position to be considered a corporate office, it is essential that it is one of those expressly mentioned in the Corporation Code or in the company's by-laws. Thus, "the creation of an office pursuant to or under a by-laws enabling provision is not enough to confer a position a corporate office."

Delegation

The company's argument that by by-laws made a valid delegation of the board's appointing power to the president was rejected by the tribunal.

It pointed out that the delegation is invalid because the law requires the board itself to elect the corporate officers. That power is "exclusively vested in the board of directors and could not be delegated to subordinate officers or agents."

However, the tribunal explained, the appointment authority granted to the president was limited to the creation of non-corporate offices to be occupied by ordinary employees. Their appointment is incidental to the president's duty as executive to select him in running the company.

In a rental cautionary note, the tribunal stressed that "a different interpretation can easily result in depriving the employee of tenure of the employee by the expedient inclusion in the by-laws of an enabling clause in the creation of just any corporate office position."

Applying the foregoing principles, the tribunal ruled that, since Cano' position is not one of those stated in the Corporation Code nor in the by-laws, he cannot be considered a corporate officer. The authority to hear and decide the complaint for illegal dismissal rests with the labor arbiter.

Want to gain the bubble of security and professional corporate office? Check the company's by-laws to verify its bragging rights.

(For feedback, please write to raul.hidalgo@inquirer.com.ph.)

Nido selling oil stock to Singapore firm

By Amy R. Remo

AUSTRALIAN-LISTED Nido Petroleum Ltd. is willing to a buyer to Singapore about 74,000 barrels of oil produced from the Tindalo oil well in offshore Palawan.

Nido said in a regulatory filing that the volume was part of the remaining inventory from the Tindalo well, which the exploration firm decided to plug and abandon after it found the prospect unviable due to increasing water-cut and declining oil production rate.

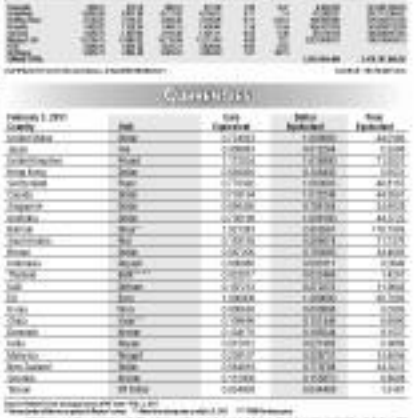
Despite the juvenile environment of the well, the Tindalo unit owned by Service Contract (SC) 54A was able to produce a total of 200,000 barrels total since.

"In my report, Nido, as operator of SC 54A, will undertake a complete review of the Tindalo development with the view to applying the lessons learned from this campaign to any future infrared development that the joint venture may wish to pursue," noted Nido president and CEO JV Emmanuel de Dios.

The Australian firm said all the contracts associated with the Tindalo project would be completed by March this year. All the operations—the Aquamarine Driller and Ever Rainbow—are currently being decommissioned.

The Aquamarine Driller is being demobilized after a heavy lift vessel to Singapore where the production unit and other customer equipment will be removed and the rig will be off-hire from the project on Feb. 15. The Ever Rainbow will also demobilize for Singapore where it will docu-ment the final charge of Tindalo crude to buyers in Singapore," Nido said.

Despite the disappointing results at the Tindalo oil field, Nido said it had continued the reprocessing of 3D ocean-bottomed seismic data to confirm the extent of SC 54A's, within the northeastern of SC 54A.



Asia Pacific airlines seen sustaining '10 growth

Oil price increases temper rise in profits

By Paolo G. Montecillo

HONGKONG-Its the Asia Pacific region are expected to sustain growth twice next last year to reach new heights in 2011 as the global economy continues to recover.

However, profit levels are likely to dip following the steady rise in oil prices, which airlines are hasted to absorb amid the stiff competition in the market, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said.

The organization of airlines around the world reported a full-year growth in air traffic of 8.2 percent in passenger volume and a 20.6 percent growth in freight.

Asia Pacific carriers performed even better, posting a growth rate of 9 percent year-on-year for passenger volume. IATA said the volume was 11 percent higher compared to December 2009 or pre-crisis levels.

European carriers passed the slowest growth rate of all regions, posting just a 5.1 percent increase for 2010 over the year before. Middle Eastern carriers performed the best with a year-on-year growth rate of 17.8 percent.

"The world is moving again. After the biggest demand decline in the history of aviation in 2009, people started to travel and do business again in 2010. Airlines ended the year slightly ahead of early 2008 volumes," IATA director general and CEO Giovanni Bisignani said in a statement.

However, profit margins were at a "pathetic" 2.7 percent at the end of the year, the group reported, noting the increase of 16 percent to raise their fares on an average passengers from flying.

"The challenge is to turn the demand for mobility into sustainable profits," he said.

A local aviation source offered a view, noting that part of it imagine would remain under pressure in the next 12 months.

"We've had consistent growth rates in the last few years and we expect that to continue in 2011," Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) Executive Director Carmelo Arcilla said in an interview.

Government data released last year showed domestic passenger traffic for the first quarter climbing 10.6 percent, due mainly to the fewer fares offered by airlines. International traffic, meanwhile, grew just under 13 percent in the same period.

However, Arcilla said the steady increase in cost of fuel would be challenge for carriers.

"Airlines are still trying to absorb it. But as to how they can deal with it depends on what kind of fuel increases we will see," he said.

As much as possible, he said airlines will try to keep fares low, especially with the stiff competition in the country's air travel sector.

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	Feb. 1, 2011	Jan. 28, 2011
Bond Fund - Peso	1.34522	1.33264
Managed Fund - Peso	1.23377	1.22124
Growth Fund - Peso	1.21383	1.19884
Equity Fund - Peso	1.12903	1.10859
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.05502	1.05351
Managed Balanced Fund 1	1.03837	1.03753
Managed Balanced Fund 2	1.03737	1.03717
Dividend Equity Fund - Peso	1.07142	1.06444
Advisory Managed Fund - Peso	1.03814	1.03196

SEAir to start flying to HK, Macau

Toyota registers record sales

TOYOTA MOTOR Philippines Corp. (TMP) registered in a record breaking performance in 2010, capped by its launching of another Triple Crown for the ninth straight year.

For a car maker to achieve a Triple Crown, it must have posted the overall highest sales in the industry, as well as the most number of vehicles sold in the passenger car and utility vehicle categories for a given calendar year.

Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. data showed that TMP closed 2010 with sales of 56,655 units, the highest ever sales volume posted in the history of the local auto industry. The goes the company a 33.7 percent share of the market.

In the passenger car category, TMP sold 23,052 units in 2010 for a 31.3 percent share of the pie. The major contributor to this feat were the Vios, Camry and Altis nameplates.

It also topped the local commercial vehicle segment, selling 33,423 units last year for a 35.8 percent market share.

TMP vice president for Sales Ying Gotu said sales in December 2010 alone, at 5,623 units, was also a record for the company, being the highest ever sales registered in a single month since the start of the company's Philippine operations in 1989. (Abigail L. Ho

GOINGS-ON

SuperFerry's Todo Todo Sali

SUPERFERRY is offering its Todo Todo Sali Sale promo this month with fares from Manila to the Visayas, and vice versa, at only P888 one-way fare inclusive of FSSC.

This is since fares are spread up to today for those traveling from Feb. 14 to March 13 for all types of accommodation.

"SuperFerry's Todo Todo Sali Sale makes us still one of the lowest-priced fares compared to other alternatives," said SuperFerry vice president for marketing Andrea Dyogi.

The Todo Todo Sali Sale serves as a prelude to SuperFerry's participation in the 18th Travel Expo where guests will be offered such holiday prices. The expo will run from Feb. 18 to 20 at the SMX Convention Center.

Piso seat sale up for grabs

CEBU PACIFIC lets passengers score an early start with the arrival of Chinese New Year by offering a Piso (P1) seat sale to any domestic destination on Feb. 4, 2011 on a first-come, first-serve basis. This is for travel from June 1 to Sept. 30, 2011.

Passengers can book flights to any of CEB's 20 domestic destinations, namely Bacolod, Boracay (Caticlan), Busuanga (Coron), Cagayan de Oro, Calbayog, Cagayan de Oro, Catarman, Cauayan (Isabela), Cebu, Clark, Coodalan, Davao, Dipolog, Dumaguete, General Santos, Iloilo, Kalibo, Legaspi, Laoag, Manila, Naga, Roxas, Pagadian, Puerto Princesa, Roxas, San Jose (Mindoro), Siargao, Surigao, Tacloban, Tagbilaran, Tuguegarao, Virac, Zamboanga.

CEB operates 53 domestic routes. It expects to end 2011 with a fleet of 37 aircraft comprised of 30 Airbus A319, 05 Airbus A320 and 02 ATR-72 600 aircraft.

Shares . . . From page B4

many investors were on holiday in observance of the Chinese New Year. Foreign interest appetite was still weak, as reflected by the P13.8 million in net foreign selling during the day.

Advancers and decliners were even at 54 stocks, while 57 issues were unchanged.

The stocks that led on heavy volume were those of AGI, PLDT, Meralco, Phelps Dodge, Manila Water and Lepanto 'A' Generic Model.

Those that gained were Banco de Oro, San Miguel Corp., Mermaid Marine, Filinvest Land, Megaworld, Security Bank, First Philippine Holdings, Nickel Asia Corp., Bank of the Philippine Islands, Ayalaland Realty, Ayala Land, San Miguel Brewery and Cebu Air.

The Dow Jones Industrial Index was up by a marginal 1.81 points or 0.02 percent to 12,041.89. Dorie C. Hamilton

Figaro steps up overseas expansion

By Abigail L. Ho

FIGARO COFFEE Systems is now on "advanced" stages of discussions with interested franchisees in various countries in Asia Pacific and the Middle East, its is known to bring its brand to more places worldwide.

In a statement issued yesterday, Figaro chief Colonel Sven Ng said the company was in talks with "very interested franchisees" from Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, and the Middle East.

The outlets in Bangladesh and Singapore, in particular, should be operational within the next few months.

The company's board, Ng said, had approved a resolution to put up as many international stores as possible. The company's five-year overseas expansion plan aimed to have the Figaro brand, and Philippine coffee, recognized in as many locations as possible.

"We will enter into all viable and profitable propositions and cities," he said. "Figaro wants to help to its own little way for the Philippine coffee industry to be acceptable worldwide."

The company just last month opened a franchise store in Wuhan City, China, the first overseas outlet under the new Figaro management team and effort, as the organization had to be streamlined and a new system had to be put in place.

Right now, he said the company was ready to be more aggressive in the international arena.

In terms of revenue, he said Figaro's new mall set-ups were recovery, following several years of financial bleeding.

The company is targeting to grow revenue by 15 percent this year.

It currently has 39 stores nationwide, 37 of them owned by franchisees. The remaining 22 outlets are company-owned.

Massive deployment . . . From page B4

there were solar power facilities are planning to sell their output to the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM), which is operational in Luzon and Visayas.

The Lopez-led First Philec Solar Corp., targets to set up the same by 150-kilowatt solar facility at WESM, Cipolliti said. Spearheaded the First Philippine Industrial Park in Batangas, Batangas, First Philec's solar facility is considered to be the country's first rooftop-installed solar facility of "utility scale."

Another investment that Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corp. is planning to sell their rights to San Miguel Corp.'s Ilijan Natural Gas-fired power plant in Batangas province.

Napocor is also in talks with Aboitiz Power Corp. for the sale of its 70-percent stake in the 1,200-megawatt Pagbilao coal-fired power plant in Quezon

BUSINESS

New oil fund without subsidies proposed

By Dexter L. Lucas

P 7FB chief of the country's largest petroleum company would have his way, he would not endorse a modified version of a President Corazon Aquino-era mechanism to help stabilize Philippine consumer prices from the effects of fuel price volatility in the world market.

Answering to Petron Corp. chair and CEO Ramon Ang, however, his proposed would have one crucial difference from the discredited Oil Price Stabilization Fund (OPSF) that was used by the government in the late 1990s: it will not subsidize the price of fuel.

"Instead of subsidizing the price of gas, what I'm proposing is for the government to peg the [automatic] value of the tax it collects for every barrel of [crude] oil we buy," Ang said in an interview yesterday.

He explained that, at present, the government taxes petroleum using through the value-added tax (VAT) levy equal to 12 percent of the value of the fuel.

"When international prices increase, the absolute amount of [petroleum] tax burden [for fuel] also increases in peso terms," Ang said. "The higher the price of fuel, the higher the tax you are paying."

Ang—who is also the president of diversified conglomerate San Miguel Corp.—likened his scheme to the defunct OPSF system to price subsidy function.

He is proposing to fix the tax value at the level government would collect for premium grade oil (gasoline—or any arbitrary level, as long as it is fixed.

"They could fix taxes at the level of (P3) per liquid or (P6) or P10 if they want," he added.

Under such a scheme, government should let pump prices move up or down freely, meaning that sharp upward spikes would be mitigated by a reduced petroleum tax burden on Filipino consumers.

"None if oil prices dive, the government will [not have to reduce its tax levy either]," he explained. "It will stay at that fixed level, and they can use the extra taxes they can for whatever need."

But such use for the excess tax collections should oil prices decline, he said, would be a final that would be used to smoothen out the volatility—but not counter the general direction—of petroleum prices.

"It will give our consumers time to cope [with higher prices]," he said.

BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS

Circular No. 711

Series of 2011

Subject: AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF REGULATIONS FOR NON-BANK FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS – PAWNSHOPS (CIRCULAR NO. 656 DATED 2 JUNE 2009)

The Monetary Board, in its Resolution No. 25 dated 6 January 2011, approved the attached amendments to Manual of Regulations for Non-Bank Financial Institutions - Pawnshops issued as Circular No. 656 dated 2 June 2009.

Existing rules and regulations specifically affected by the provisions of this Circular are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

This Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in newspaper of general circulation.

For the Monetary Board

(Sgd.) AMANDO M. TETANGCO, JR.
Governor

06 January 2011

Note:
A copy of the signed document shall be attached to any duly reproduced from the BSP website, www.bsp.gov.ph under "Regulations/Circulars"

Spreads of PH debt paper improved in '10

By Michelle V. Remo

SPREADS FOR Philippine debt paper narrowed further in the fourth quarter of 2010 as the outlook of investors on the country's ability to meet obligations was boosted by the latest credit rating upgrade.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that average spread on debt instruments issued by government and corporate entities from the Philippines, measured in terms of the emerging market bond index (EMBI) + Philippine spread, stood at 159 basis points by end-December 2010.

This was lower than the 198 basis points registered as of September and was comparable to spreads registered prior to the collapse of US financial giant Lehman Brothers.

Economists said the collapse of Lehman Brothers marked the start of the economic crisis, triggering a global recession in 2009.

EMBI + Philippine spread measures the premium sought by investors in purchasing Philippine debt instruments instead of US treasuries. The latter are considered less risky than securities issued by entities from emerging markets.

The latest EMBI + Philippines was also narrower than the average spread for emerging markets' debt paper, measured in terms of EMBI + global, that stood at 241 basis points as of September.

The BSP said in a report that spreads on Philippine debt papers had been falling last year due to growing investors' confidence in emerging markets.

In November, Standard & Poor's raised the country's credit rating by a notch, citing its growing reserves of foreign currencies, foreign inflation, and economic growth.

(L-R): 2011 PANA President and VP Corporate Brands and Corporations, Bayan Telecommunications, Inc., John Noel, Mr. Richard Magtalong, Mall Manager of SM Centre Pasig and Member of SM Environmental Committee, Ms. Lucy E. Dinio, AVP for Operations - Central Region, Ms. Annie S. Garcia, SM Supermalls President, Mr. Nilda P. Chicano, SM VP for Marketing Communications Group, and Mr. Rayston Calonsag, AVP for Mall Operations and Program Director for the Youth and Children's Welfare

SM SUPERMALLS GREEN FILM FESTIVAL WINS PANATA AWARD

The Green Film Festival of the SM Supermalls received an Award of Merit during the coveted Panata Awards at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

The film festival, which was organized by the SM Supermalls Environmental Committee in partnership with DepEd, DENR, WWF, Miss Earth Foundation, the Ateneo Bank, and Pasigandahan to create more awareness about climate change, has to date been viewed by 200,426 schools/children all over the country. Showcasing environmentally oriented films like An Inconvenient Truth, Penguin, Penguin Pasiro

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B1
BUSINESS

BOC pushing for voluntary disclosure scheme

Grant of relief from penalties, other charges

By Bonnel W. Domingo

THE BUREAU of Customs is scanning on the approval of a proposed scheme that would grant delinquent importers relief from penalties to help the agency meet its February collection goal of P58.8 billion.

Customs Commissioner Angelito S. Alvarez yesterday said its proposal for a voluntary disclosure program was awaiting Finance Secretary Cesar V. Purisima's approval.

Alvarez said the BOC was not so confident of meeting its monthly goal for the second month in a row considering that inventories related to the latest new year, and the flurry of shipments arising from them have culminated.

"It would be quite difficult to meet the February collection target," Alvarez said, adding that major ports such as the Port of Manila would find it difficult to achieve their respective goals.

He said imports related to the celebrations that landed at the Port of Manila had accounted for about 40 percent of the total container inventory in January.

If the BOC succeeds in February, it would be the second consecutive time it would meet its goal this year. In January, the agency met its collection target of about P50 billion.

"We cannot have something like the Chinese New Year every month to help us meet our revenue targets," Alvarez said. "But I am optimistic that we can find ways to offset any losses that we might incur because of customs free trade agreements that the Philippines is implementing."

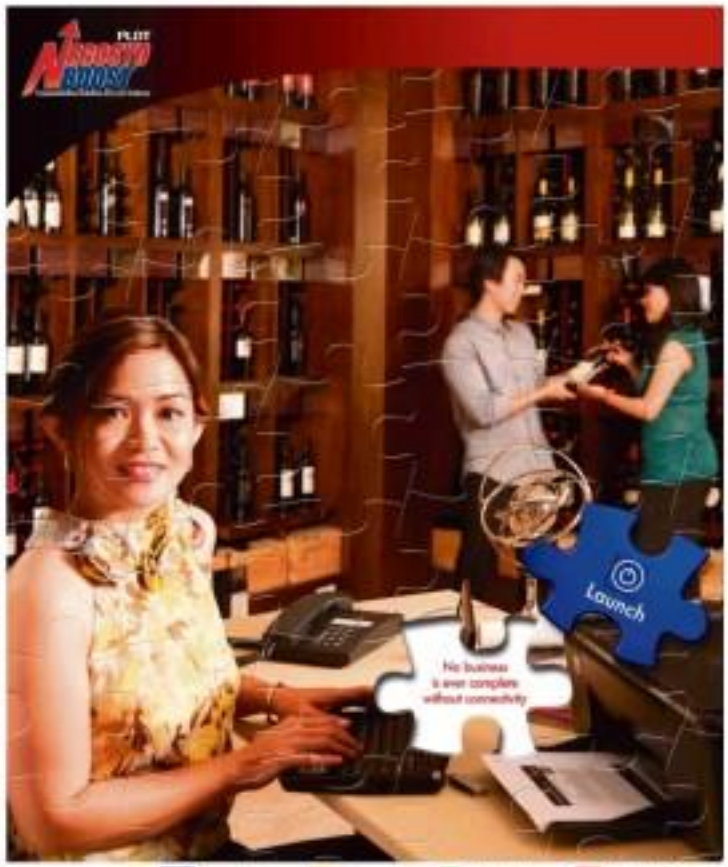
He said the proposed voluntary disclosure program might prove helpful as it would be similar to an abatement program that the Bureau of Internal Revenue recently implemented, and through which the BIR raised some P1 billion from delinquent taxpayers.

Based on the proposal, the BOC is willing to forego of surcharges and penalties and instead collect from errant importers the basic tax due to the government.

The Tariff and Customs Code imposes surcharges of 25 percent to 50 percent and a yearly interest of 12 percent on the duties that shippers and importers owe the government.

Alvarez said that if the proposed program would be approved, the plan was to implement it for at least three months.

He explained that it was the minimum time needed to allow taxpayers penalties and surcharges that the bureau would forego with the basic duties that could be collected.



Petron declares cash dividend

PETRON CORP., the country's largest oil refiner and retailer, yesterday said its board of directors had approved the payment of cash dividend of P2.382 per share on preferred shares.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Petron said it was targeting to pay the dividends on March 7 this year to stockholders of record as of Feb. 21.

Its dividend policy requires Petron to declare dividends out of the company's unrestricted retained earnings, at least 25 percent of its unappropriated net income (after taxes) for the prior fiscal year, payable either in cash, property or shares.

The company's board will determine, by resolution, the exact amount, date and the shareholders entitled to such dividends.

The oil firm declared dividends and paid preferred shareholders P2.383 per share on June 7 and P2.392 per share on Dec. 6, 2010. —Amy R. Remo

Bad weather set to push record food prices higher

Leaders need to put food first, says World Bank head Zoellick

MANILA/MILAN—The UN's food price index likely hit a new high on January and record commodities are headed toward further gains, a development that may deepen the global food crisis, as bad weather hits crops and fuels speculation.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO), measuring monthly price changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy, meat and sugar, hit a record in December, above a previous high set in June 2008 when there were food riots in countries around the world.

This week's massive cyclone in Australia, a severe winter storm across much of the United States and flooding in key commodity producers Malaysia look set to worsen the squeeze.

A lack of high oil and fuel prices, pressing use of biofuels, bad weather and soaring futures markets pushed up prices of food in 2007-08, sparking civil unrest protests in countries including Egypt, Cameroon and Haiti.

The FAO has warned food prices could climb even higher, expressing concern about global weather patterns.

Surging food prices have come back into the spotlight after they helped fuel the clashes that led to unrest the president in January and have spilled over to Egypt and Jordan, stirring opposition rulers elsewhere in the region would worsen grim stories to consumers their populations.

Where major farmers hit a record high and raise major futures rises to their highest in more than 30 years in front of the damage Cyclone "Yasi" would bring to the Australian east coast.

The worst strikes storm for decades in the United States drives robust futures to their highest in nearly 2-1/2 years, and Midwestern palm oil prices are set to rise to their highest in nearly three years.

Sugar hits

BUSINESS Friday
Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino

Low prices not enough to reel in customers

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

RETAIL COMPANIES cannot survive on cheap prices alone.

Even ever-tightening competition in the market populated by both local and powerful global brands and the enduring preference of Filipino customers, "value" no longer equates to just the price.

Some companies may offer the cheapest price, but that is not a guarantee that consumers will want to, under a purchase and then come back for more.

Instead, they may opt to go to another store, even if it is selling similar goods at higher prices.

Don't borrow then feel that they are getting something more, an added "value" such as customer service.

Players in the profitable and growing retail industry in the Philippines approach and define customer service in different ways, but the goal is the same: to build loyalty so that even if faced with an array of choices, customers will still part with their money in their stores, branches or malls.

True Value

For True Value Hardware Co. of the Gokongwei group, improving customer service means ensuring that the management down to the rank and file fully understands its evolution. On one end, it means standardizing the customer experience because shoppers have become very discriminating. There is a constant need to re-energize and change the conventional way of doing business.

"Having the right people who understand the business operations, are well-equipped with the right skills and competencies, and possess a positive work attitude will surely contribute to the growth of the business as they are able to develop healthy relationships with our customers," Ilarmo says.

Ilarmo says that continuous training will continue to be one of the major thrusts of True Value going forward because management believes that money spent on training is not an expense, but an investment in people who will further build the organization.

"This year, employee development will not only focus on the more essential and operations-critical competency-building programs, but on improving technical, financial and leadership skills as well," she says.

Stanley Co., general manager of True Value, shares that companies like True Value must do all they can to gain the customers' loyalty because shoppers today consider factors other than price when making a purchase decision.

"The Filipino shopper's psyche not only considers price but evaluates other factors in making purchase decisions such as store location, value for money, and customer service especially for a store like True Value where our products require skills knowledge or at least familiarity to using them," he says.

"For True Value, it is important to consistently invest in training so that our team personnel are well-equipped to share the correct information with our customers with regards the products we sell and help them come up with sound decisions. Customer service also means 'after-sales' services so we could continually assist our shoppers with their project needs. Only a high-quality service can win the groundwork for a long-term relationship with our customers, making them repeat buyers instead of one-time purchasers," Co adds.

Makita

For Eric Teng, owner of the Makita, Black Hawks and Bluecoal stores, investments in consumer service this year will center on enhancing store ambiance and personality to customize content because Mr. Home believes the customers deserve nothing less than the best from My Home.

"We do not underestimate our customers. We believe that good service, combined with great quality products, will give customers reasons to keep coming back to the store," she says. "Filipinos are truly very smart individuals, especially with regards to their shopping. They value the products they buy, the service they are given, and the relationships that they have established during their stay inside the store."

SM Department Store shares the same view on customer service with Our Home. According to SM Vice President Millie Dizon, service of the department store go way beyond shopping.

"We aim for our Store for our customers to enjoy shopping in our stores, and while they are there, they can also do errands like paying their utility and credit card bills, and buy tickets to the various shows in town in our customer service counters. They can also exchange foreign currency and do remittance transactions, as well as availing of government services like the SSS," Dizon says. "We also have the Warranty Program through the SM advantage and Prestige Cards and for the latter, we have a Prestige Lounge where members can avail of special services as they shop."

Dizon says these services have helped SM develop a diverse roll-out of products with the customers because they have made life easier for the busy shoppers.

"Many of our customers come to our store more several times a week and by integrating these services, we make it easy for them to do their chores as they shop. Talk about multitasking in a one-stop shop," she says. "Our livework programs, on the other hand, give our customers perks that enhance the shopping experience."

And Dizon is not alone in step investing in its offerings.

"We always have to be in tune with the ever changing needs of our customers to be able to serve them better. In retail, everything is dynamic, always changing, and becoming more competitive with time. And it's important for malls establishment to keep abreast of the changing times," she says.

RETAIL companies have different ways of maximizing customer service.

Fake Louis Vuitton goods destroyed

LOUIS VUITTON of France, the famed maker of luxurious fashion items, has scored a series of legal victories in its campaign to stop the distribution and sale of counterfeit Louis Vuitton products in the Philippines.

Recently, P1.2 billion worth of bogus Louis Vuitton products were destroyed following a government crackdown on counterfeiters.

The destroyed counterfeits were seized from shopping malls, retail outlets and warehouses in and around Metro Manila.

"In coordination with the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines, Sabe Louis Vuitton raided stores and seized from the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan," said lawyer Rhona Yongco, the senior partner of the Yongco Manzanque Jamora Gonzales (YMJG) Law Offices, the retained Philippine counsel of Louis Vuitton.

According to Yongco, the French fashion house owns 98 of the world's most famous and valuable brands that include—aside from Louis Vuitton—Moet Hennessy, Fendi and Celine.

But Yongco added that Louis Vuitton suffers the most at the hands of counterfeiters.

Yongco said the problem had reached now a national embarrassment.

"The proliferation of vendors brazenly plying counterfeit goods even inside malls, coupled with the lack of exhibition of law enforcers to check the problem was not improving our image abroad," she said.

"Louis Vuitton also worried about the potential blight that the bogus goods was creating on the fashion brand," the lawyer added.

The products prompted Louis Vuitton representatives to fly to Manila last November to personally request the help of authorities.

In coordination with lawyers from the YMJG Law Offices, the Louis Vuitton officials were able to arrange an audience with Commissioner Angelito Alvarez of the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and Director General Ricardo Blancaflor of the Intellectual Property Office (IPO).

During the meeting, Louis Vuitton officials received the assurance of Alvarez and Blancaflor of the support of their respective agencies to mount a crackdown on Louis Vuitton counterfeiters.

Personnel from the BOC, IPO, the National Bureau of Investigation and the Anti-Fraud and Commercial Crimes Division within the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of the Philippine National Police have consolidated their efforts to mount a series of raids on known havens of bogus Louis Vuitton products.

"All the confiscated items, valued at P1.2 billion, were recently brought to the Ermita Deposits destruction facility inside the Manila Harbour Center where they were shredded and destroyed," Yongco added.

Wanted: Creative, effective road safety ads

By Roger Pe
Contributor

TRUE FRIED Food Inc.Chi Minh and Hanoi in Vietnam are always flooded, with motorcycles, that is.

Vietnam is awash in motorbikes of all brands—Kawasaki, Yamaha, Honda and other brands from India.

As such, a typical Vietnamese runs the risk of being sideswiped by these birds of the road.

Neighboring Cambodia is another country inundated with motorbikes. The collective roar from these thundering machines is frighteningly deafening, blasting your ears wherever you are, wherever you go.

In both countries, the sound of motorbikes means either the sound of life emerging from years of turmoil, or death from a tragic accident.

In the Philippines, where car prices continue to go up and motorcycles provide cheap transportation alternative, one couldn't help but ask: Will our streets go the way of Viet nam?

Far-fetched but it could happen.

Motorcycle sales are on a phenomenal upturn because these are affordable and may be cheaply maintained. Riding on the craze of this boom is the rise in the number of road accidents.

Accidents involving motorbikes have been increasing at an alarming rate. There isn't a single week when you won't hear of an accident involving motorcycles on national TV. Cud knows how many more go unreported.

In filing a bill banning motorcycles from main thoroughfares and national highways, Sen. Panfilo Lacson recently have cited the rise in motorcycle accidents, describing it as a public health epidemic.

A World Health Organization study backed up the bill. Nearly 1.3 million people aged 15 years old and under from all over the world die of road accidents every year.

The report also mentioned that motorcycle accidents in the Philippines had been increasing at an annual rate of 40 percent.

Effective, creative advertising

In 2007, after 9 years of lobbying, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) issued Administrative Order No. 2007-0026 which banned motorcycles from major thoroughfares in Metro Manila.

The law, however, was not implemented effectively. Motorcycles are still allowed in major thoroughfares in Metro Manila.

Implementation of the law is the responsibility of the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the Land Transportation Office (LTO).

Despite the lack of implementation, the law has been effective in one aspect: Public awareness.

Public awareness campaigns, such as the Metro Manila Development Authority's (MMDA) "Ligtas Kung Ligtas" campaign, have been effective in reducing the number of accidents.

The campaign was launched in 2008 and was spearheaded by Bayani Fernando, then chairman of the MMDA. Fernando is now the mayor of Marikina City.

The campaign's goal was to reduce the number of road accidents by 10 percent. The number of injuries decreased by 18 percent from the previous year.

The campaign's success was due to its effective use of creative advertising.

The campaign's ads were memorable and effective in getting the message across.

The ads were also effective in changing people's mindset.

It also meant something for two Filipino expats in Vietnam who were directly involved in subverting the campaign: Bambu Mojica, current Ogilvy Vietnam managing director, and world-class photographer James Nuanguang.

From that campaign, Vietnam settled its first global awards ad winner in 2007, the campaign was launched in Cannes and Vietnam earned a Clio. One Show included it in the first World Press Awards annual.

The same campaign also Vietnam's first 5th Effie Awards Award winner in 2008, urban planning a purpose higher than just promoting products—it succeeded in changing people's minds.

A WORLD CLASS print ad campaign on road safety from Vietnam.

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BUSINESS

Strategies for agricultural development

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

THE RECOMMENDED agricultural development goals that we identified last week generated a lot of interest. We now zoom here eight preliminary cross-cutting strategies that are necessary to support these goals.

As we said earlier, these goals and strategies were identified in a small group discussion which included former agriculture committee chair Francis Pangilinan, former Agriculture Secretary Senen Bacani, former Economic Planning Secretary Cielito Habito, Department of Agriculture (DA) officials and farmer leaders.

These preliminary goals and strategies will be improved at the Philippine Agricultural and Fisheries 2022- PAF 2022) Multi-sectoral Conference next week, from Feb. 10 to 11.

We have categorized the eight strategies into two groups: general and area specific.

COMMENTARY

General

The first four strategies are:

1. Organize farmers and fishers.

Without organization, farmers and fishers will not have the advantage of economies of scale in areas like production, processing, and marketing.

Individually, they are also subject to exploitation by middlemen.

As Kalinga had stated, the middlemen get too large a percentage of the wholesale price.

This leaves the farmers with too little to make agriculture profitable for them.

In the Philippines, the ratio of farm-gate price to wholesale price is only 47 percent. It is 61 percent in India, 65 percent in Thailand and 77 percent in China.

2. Strengthen and mobilize greater LGU support for agriculture and fisheries.

Where the DA functions were devolved to the local governments units (LGUs), the budgets were not seamlessly devolved. Also, many LGUs were not appropriately equipped to carry out the devolved agricultural development functions.

The recent Batman of the extensions work of the now devolved agricultural technicians were not done effectively. This is critical for agricultural development.

3. Restore integrity and eliminate pervasive corruption.

Under the leadership of Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala, this is being improved. But much still needs to be done.

With corruption out of the way, this year's P58 billion budget of the DA will be used for true agricultural development, instead of disappearing into various agricultural scams, as in the past.

4. Rationalize the DA budget.

But the budget to be used effectively, eliminating corruption is not enough. It should be formulated differently to support key DA functions, such as research and development, credit access, extension work, and marketing. In addition, a cost-benefit approach to alternative DA interventions should be used so that those with the highest farmers investment (ROI) will be funded.

Area specific

The remaining four strategies are: develop fisheries; empower rural women; strengthen credit, guarantees, and insurance; and confront the impact of and adapt to climate change.

It is amazing what can be done if creative programs can be formulated for these areas.

The World Bank has stated that, generally, it is better to invest in women than men.

Rural development experts have also shown the great potential that can be accelerated by municipal fishers, who constitute the poorest sector in our country today.

The usefulness of identifying key goals and strategies is that resources for programs can now be channeled to support them, instead of planning and budgeting primarily for production targets, implementing this paradigm shift will result in much better support for agriculture.

Next steps

These goals and strategies will be vastly improved at the PAF 2022- public-private partnership (PPP)-inspired conference scheduled for next week.

It is appropriately entitled "Shared Vision, Shared Journey."

Further suggestions can be sent to the Congressional Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization (COCAFM), Philippine Senate.

This can be done even before Feb. 10 so that they can be discussed at the conference.

Alfa 21 can then result in an agricultural development paradigm shift under Secretary Alcala's lead- redirection is absolutely necessary if we are to succeed in this critical area.

(The author is chair of Agriwatch, former secretary for presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary for agriculture, and trade and industry. For inquiries and suggestions, e-mail agriwatch.phil@yahoo.com or telefax (02) 8522112)

Clear master plan for forestry sought

Sensitive, protected areas to be identified

By Ria T. Olivencia

THE FORESTRY sector has urged the government to craft a forestry master plan that will, among others, set clearly which areas can be tapped for sustainable logging activities and which ones are protected.

"Sustainable logging in forest production areas and the ban on logging in protected areas will ... provide our timber and other forest product requirements, and address the marginalization and livelihood of forest dependent communities while conserving the biodiversity of our forest ecosystems," said Forest Environment Secretary Regulo M. Umali, a member of the Society of Philippine Foresters Inc. (SPFI).

In contrast, he said, a proposed log ban will drive up prices of wood products, thus hurting consumers, especially the lower income class. Eventually, tighter supply can lead to more illegal logging.

"A logging ban will become a self-inflicted wound on the country's economy as the National Treasury's revenues are inflicted for the unavoidable imposition of 'zero' in general construction. The opportunity loss will be most difficult to catch: when another country's forest-based industry would benefit from our ill-advised steps," Umali said.

The Philippines needs 2.5 million cubic meters of wood to supply its wood-based industry that sells to the local and international markets.

About 1.2 million cubic meters come from local sources while the rest are supplied by wood imports.

What the country needs, Umali said, is to **have a master plan that will detail the classification** of the country's forests, adoption of a **watershed and ecosystem, and multi-sectoral** community approaches to promote holistic and sustainable forestry actions and activities.

This will include the establishment of Watershed Management Areas (WMA) and Productive Forest Areas (PFA) to establish development units (LGU) based on the Watershed Ecosystems Management approach, thus forming two national systems of forest areas in addition to the existing national system of protected areas (Nipas).

There should also be proper zoning into strict protection zones and controlled use zones in PFMA and PFA satisfying the need for appropriate land use planning in forestlands.

This will also entail the identification and delineation of high conservation value (HCV) forests even in controlled use zones.

HCV includes biodiversity values at species, landscape, and ecosystem levels, as well as such essential conservation values as soil and water protection, geo-hazard areas, climate change vulnerable areas, and indigenous cultural preservation and ecosystem areas.

All these action plans, Umali said, can be incorporated in the proposed Sustainable Forest Management Act that is now pending in Congress, and which foresters are pushing for immediate passage.

Antero G. Pinpin, who is affiliated with foresters and the wood producing industry, said in an earlier interview that a blanket log ban in the Philippines will affect about 2 million Filipino workers who depend on the wood industry for their income.

At the same time, he said, forest without corporate caretakers become more vulnerable to illegal loggers as "free for all" areas.

"A total log ban would also prevent corporate farmers from harvesting what has been invested in and planted 25 years ago. So much for PPP (public-private partnership)," Pinpin said.

ROADTALK Special Edition
Editor Jang Arsenio

Lucky 9

A giant picks up the pieces, and gets itself a 'triple crown'

By Tonyo R. Salazar

WHEN 89 Japan, super cents major Denmark to look your world. And sometimes, that shouldn't be taken literally. Take the case of Toyota Motor Corp. Having worked itself up to be the biggest carmaker in the planet, a soul-shaking "earthquake" struck from the Pivot. The corporate giant, seemingly strong in its position, was flanked, tsunami-like, by a wave of safety scandals. The "whirlwinds" included embarrassing hearings in the US Congress, picked up by major cable news networks for all the world to see (world's biggest carmaker vs world's greatest superpower—who wouldn't want to see that). Though the epicenter of this controversy could be traced to the United States, the shockwaves traveled throughout the motoring world. In the Philippines, worried Toyota and Lexus customers harangued their dealers, though none dared pressed that the problems, if there were any, existed elsewhere.

Barely over a year after the scuffle, Toyota Motor Philippines, in a moment of introspection, has remembered the most recent tribulations a blessing. Well, not only "has it not killed the carmaker (remember the adage: What doesn't kill you makes you stronger), but it opened up the corporate giants' eyes and sort said provided it a newfound grasp of reality. TMP executives claim that their erstwhile "threat" customers, who comprised the vast majority of their client base, started speaking up and became more vocal of their concerns with Toyota. TMP says it saw the widening gap between their customers' perception of the cars and that of the carmaker. In the end, sales figures for Toyota in the Philippines barely dipped.

Toyota was rocked, but didn't go down. In some parts of the world, the carmaker even performed better in a controversy-hounded year. The Economist reported recently that Toyota retained its crown as the world's biggest carmaker, selling 8.4 million vehicles in 2010 despite the American sales and an 11 percent dip in the European market. Asian sales records Japan "record showing 3.6 percent."

During the Jan. 27 Toyota media thanksgiving party, Toyota Motor Philippines president Michimoto Sugata disclosed that, in the wake of the monster recalls, Toyota Motor Corp had instituted a Global Quality Task Force headed by Akio Toyoda to promote quality assurance activities to address safety concerns of its customers. Sugata stressed that Toyota "will continue to place the highest priority in safety and quality in our operations."

Sugata told the investors that Toyota's reputation in the Philippines wasn't affected in the product recalls. In fact, he said, TMP has just earned its 9th consecutive Triple Crown. Title by dominating the passenger car and commercial vehicle segments and overall car and vehicle sales.

The bespectacled and approachable Sugata, whose disarming smile is as much assured in his serious, hands-on approach to controversial issues, was forthright in his urges to "have green customers concerns or anxiety on our products."

"The painful but very valuable lessons we learned is [re-stirring] we had a gap (existing) between our evaluation of the product and the customers' perception of the product. Fortunately, Toyota (can) this gap and we fully recognize this. We are trying hard to minimize the gap. That is the challenge."

As an example, he cited the voluntary recall of the Prius' anti-lock brake system even if "it worked properly." He explained that the customers had a specific idea of the stopping distance of a car, but the ABS actual stopping distances was longer. "It had that effect on customers' thinking 'unfair,'" Customers, he said, were basically unsatisfied with the fact that the Prius stopping distance was longer than they thought. "That's a big gap for Toyota that we're trying to rectify," Sugata stressed.

In how on Earth can Toyota manage to lose so much and covery use of its millions of customers? That would be the ultimate goal, Sugata said. Because, he trusted, that would be the only way to find out what the truth's were.

Prius buyouts: Mourning

suggested Toyota make less cars to make less mistakes, Sugata let out a hearty laugh. The man has a good sense of humor.

Prius as 'the proposal'

The man also has a good head on his shoulders when it comes to environmental concerns.

Sugata said he doesn't care about the sales performance of the Prius when asked about TMP's continued efforts to market the hybrid car in the Philippines.

"My personal view is to [concentrate] the Prius in the country as a proposal to society about environmental protection and energy conservation. Unfortunately, the Prius is very highly priced. So, sales is not our key performance indicator because, [regardless of sales] we will continue to enhance our hybrid lineup."

It helps, though, that business isn't all that bad for the Prius. Since June 2009, TMP has sold 4,000 Prius units.

Imagine if the government sweetened the price of the Prius by providing it with some tax incentives. That would make Sugata's day, no doubt. "I do hope some tax incentives be given to hybrid vehicles the way they do it to some countries like Thailand, Malaysia."

And not to be all to the bitters, all-electric vehicles may come along with the hybrids. "According to Japanese headquarters, they will introduce electric vehicles in 2012," Sugata revealed.

So, in light of TMP's bagging the triple crown for the 9th consecutive year, what have been Sugata's top 9 blessings Toyota should be thankful for?

1. The "voice from heaven." Those are Toyota's silent customers who have been motivated by the massive recalls to speak up. Those voices, Sugata stressed, have shared valuable feedback—feedback that would have been kept hidden had the recalls not happened. "Even though we're not affected in the Philippines, expressed concerns

THE Innova is the country's best-selling commercial vehicle.

Number One
and still working hard

By Jason K. Ang

IT'S GREAT to be number one. Toyota retained its position as the world's number one automaker in 2013, selling 8.42 million vehicles. Its global sales increased by 6 percent from 2009, with solid sales growth in China and other countries in Asia.

In the Philippines, where 2013 saw the auto industry surpass its previous sales record, Toyota Motor Philippines holds onto the top spot, with a 33 percent market share. Its subcompact Vios sedan and Innova MPV are leaders in their respective segments.

In the home market of Japan, Toyota's Prius is hot and may be best-selling vehicle, with 215,000 units sold in 2013. That's nearly double the volume of the next-ranked Philippine auto industry, and breaks the sales record for a single model in Japan (previously held by another Toyota, the Corolla). At the recent North American International Auto Show (NAIAS), Toyota has expanded the Prius brand, launching a production full wagon, an upcoming plug-in version, and a compact city car all are expected to have the Prius' exceptional fuel economy, while catering to different users.

Toyota is a world leader in hybrid technology. It has recently added its 10 technological bases with its investment in electric car startup Tesla Motors. Toyota and Tesla will collaborate on projects in the RAV4 EV all-electric vehicle. This will be a long-awaited successor to the first RAV4 EV, which has attained a cult status among electric car enthusiasts.

Toyota already has an extensive local lineup, but we could help but browse through Toyota's worldwide catalog, and wish that they would add some accessorize vehicles to their Philippine offerings:

Toyota 4X. A sedan that can seat three within its diminutive cab three meter length. This would be an excellent car for city dwellers, and if priced right, can be an ideal fleet car for many. In a sign of the car's inherent capability, ultra-hearty sports car maker Aston Martin is basing its city car on the 4X.

Toyota FJ Cruiser. The modern incarnation of the original Land Cruiser (at least where styling is concerned), it's the SUV-coupe done right. It's enjoying a brisk trade in the gray market, so it's a no-brainer for Toyota to start selling this officially. While we're dreaming, let's wish for a (currently non-existent) diesel version, too.

Toyota FF-86. This is based on another classic nameplate and update of a successful formula. Designed in collaboration with Subaru, in which Toyota has a minority stake, the front-engine, rear-wheel drive sports car is scheduled to go on sale in 2015.

Toyota Urban Cruiser. Urban Cruiser is a compact crossover that can slot below the RAV4. Its mini-box meter length and reportedly thrifty 1.6L/up, 1.3-liter gasoline engine should make it a strong alternative to traditional hatchbacks.

Toyota Rustic. If the Urban Cruiser isn't small or cheap enough, imagine the Avanza styled to look like a mini-Fortuner and you have the subcompact Rush. With seven (unlimited-by-tight) seats within its compact frame, the Rush should do well in crowded and price-sensitive.

Toyota Crown. The Camry is available, but somehow, it's not the same as Toyota's flagship large sedan. Based on the last Crown sold here and their performance as taxi and whatnot in Hong Kong and Singapore, they are built to last and incredibly roomy. The Crown Majesta variant boasts some executive-class to the Maserati Quattroporte.

Still, challenges remain for the Japanese car giant. In the wake of the recent exit of CEO Akio Toyoda, grandson of the company founder. He has expressed committed to producing safe and quality cars, saying, "My name is on every car." What leader will he customers to that. Toyoda is a car enthusiast and amateur racer, taking a personal interest in the development of new models.

While notching up the lead is an impressive achievement, Toyota said it was not contented with beating other companies. Toyota spokesman Paul Stobaus said, "Our objective is to become No. 1 with the customers. We want to be there in every car manufacturer."

THE Land Cruiser 200

THE FT-86 designed in collaboration with Subaru.

THE Urban Cruiser is a compact crossover.

Toyota takes lead in reforestation campaign with well-funded Peñablanca project

IN THOSE times when we have to brace ourselves for the (a bit) more severe phenomenon intensified by climate change, we must seek the help of Mother Nature's bounty in the quest to undo the damage we have wrought upon ourselves?

A reforestation project in Cagayan could very well be Toyota's answer.

The Toyota Motor Corp. has earmarked at least 134.86 million Japanese yen (P85.36 million) to reforest its three main parts of the Peñablanca forest reserve.

The fund allotment represents the second phase of the Philippine Peñablanca Watershed Reforestation Project (PWRP) and would cover at least 720 hectares of the 2,500-hectare total reforestation area.

The project, whose first phase started in 2007, would also cover 178 hectares for enhancement planting and 540 hectares for agroforestry.

Funds given to the project reaffirm Toyota's commitment to environmental protection and part of its corporate social responsibility.

The project involved the establishment of a forest dedicated to the harvesting of firewood. It also encourages villagers to plant alternative cash crops to fight illegal logging and slash-and-burn (kaingin) farming in the area.

The PWRP's first phase, through a 284-million-yen fund (about P116 million) from JMC, reforested 912 hectares, rehabilitated 300 hectares through enhancement planting and restored 500 hectares for agroforestry.

Protected landscape

The Peñablanca reforestation site—located in the villages of Sicsic, Calaoagan, Dugo'ng, San Roque and Mangga—lies within the protected landscape and seascape in the town and one of the key biodiversity areas in the country.

Various threatened and endemic species of plants and animals, including the Philippine eagle (Pithecophaga jefferyi) have been seen and recorded in the protected site which hosts rare species.

Archeological studies yielded pieces of evidence of early humans living in the caves in the park, making it one of the important archeological sites in the country.

Pebablanca, 24 kilometers from the capital city of Tuguegarao, encompasses part of the headwaters of the mighty Cagayan River. The river supports the country's largest rice-growing region, but deforestation in the area has contributed to flood and drought downstream.

Reforestation cannot only mitigate soil erosion but also "recharge" the Cagayan River, according to Conservation International Philippines.

The reforestation project started on Sept. 15, 2007, and is now on its second phase. The project covers 1,100 hectares of reforestation, 476 hectares of enhancement planting (for open areas), and 780 hectares of agroforestry (primarily of mango trees).

Peñablanca is home to many national treasures, such as the ancient Callao Caves (with a chapel built inside its cavernous mouth) and the Cagayan River. Up to 378 species of flora and fauna (birds, reptiles, bats and mole) are found here, including the endangered Philippine Eagle (Pithecophaga jefferyi).

Reforestation provides a sustainable alternative to the kaingin practices of native dwellers which has contributed significantly to soil erosion on the mountainsides.

To discourage people from cutting trees for firewood, project members have educated and encouraged them to plant fast-growing gmelina and other designated species for firewood.

Toyota and Conservation International will also provide rice-mill stoves for 500 families in the area.

Lucky 9

From page B1-4

(from customers) increased 60 percent. We have to listen to them."

Segura said the Global Quality Task Force would ensure that all feedback would be given the attention "you deserve."

"I asked all the dealers to be honest with customers' complaints to TMP. We have to remove the barrier between dealers and TMP. We asked even managers and service agents of the customers' complaints and concerns we should know."

2. Obstacles that seem negative at first, but have become opportunities for growth in the long run. Segura said protective measures in addressing the quality concerns has also meant TMP taking part in TMC's Global Quality Task Force activities. The entry of aggressive competitors in the country has also meant "breaking a lot of things from them so we can rethink of our own marketing strategies and even product planning. We are now in a position to protect our number one (status)."

3. Sales records. Segura declared TMP was able to surpass monthly sales records three times last year. As a result, he said, TMP sold 50,955 units (including the Lexus brand) in 2013, "our highest annual sales record both for Toyota and Lexus since the start of our operations in 1989, giving us our 9th consecutive Triple Crown title.

4. New products. Segura observed that Toyota rolled out a number of new products last year, which helped it reach its record sales. Additional features such as the brown Sport Interior, Vios 1.3 AT, the Fortuner 4.0 Gasoline, and other model changes for the Vios, Altis, Hi-ace and the addition of Toyota's flagship minivan—the Alphard—all helped catapult Toyota to its sales.

"To further strengthen our hybrid lineup, Lexus introduced the country's first full luxury hybrid vehicles the LS600H and the RX450H models. On top of these, we will be showing the new addition to our Lexus hybrid lineup to about a month. So, please keep your eyes on Lexus."

5. CEO set-up. Toyota's CEO models, Vios and Innova, remain to be the top two best-selling models in the country. "This serves as a testimony of our unwavering commitment to local production," Segura said.

6. Toyota plant's output. In line with the CEO boom, the Toyota Santa Rosa plant registered the highest output of 28,412 units in 2013. And just in time, Segura disclosed that in October, the plant's production capacities were increased from 20,000 to 30,480 units under the two-shift operation with no overtime.

7. Manufacturing quality still rated "excellent." TMP was bestowed the "Excellent Manufacturing Quality" award by JMC in Japan, as among the world's top five Toyota manufacturing units based on its performance in ensuring quality for two years straight.

8. Independent survey validates TMP's status. TMP achieved the No. 1 ranking and bested 11 other brands in the 2013 J.D. Power-Consumer Satisfaction Index Survey. On top of that, the nationwide Toyota service network registered the highest number of units serviced at 493,874 units, with service workshop cubicles handling 894 units and parts retail sales of P3.42 billion. "We have also accommodated and completed service, up around 4,000 flooded vehicles (from the Ondoy typhoon). We are quite confident and proud of our level of service service facility capability and satisfaction for, send any other brand in the Philippines."

9. Corporate environmental responsibility. TMP was awarded with the DENR Seal of Approval to the Philippine Environment Partnership Program for auto compliance to environmental standards.

Inevitably, these blessings have risen to weekend (the amiable Segura's smile.

How the other Toyotas fared in the market

INNOVA	FORTUNER	AVANZA
12,608	7,548	6,076
HILUX	**ALTIS**	**HIACE**
4,322	4,257	3,963
CAMRY	**RAV 4**	**YARIS**
927	384	320
LC 200	**PRADO**	**PREVIA**
297	285	114
ALPHARD	**PRIUS**	**COASTER**
103	23	2

A blue chip buy

Kelley's Blue Book Resale Value Awards prove Toyota's true worth

AKIO Toyoda, president of Toyota Motor Corp. rides the "Hilinger" in this file photo.

By Alvin Uy

TOYOTA HAS been a dominant brand in the country, covering more than a third of the entire car market. After decades of supplying the market with reliable and fuel efficient cars, other more upmarket brands seem to be catching up on his or their own qualities are concerned. So what makes a Toyota different? Perhaps another factor in buying a Toyota would be its resale value.

When the time comes to part ways with your old car and look for a new replacement, aside from negotiating to get a good deal on the price, features and sometimes even the financing rates, buyers have to consider the resale value of their cars, as single brand dealers would take in trade-ins from other brands nowadays. By experience, seasoned used car dealers will tell you that buying or trading in a Toyota has one of the highest if not the highest resale value. After using your Unity Toyota for three to five years, owners usually get a higher offering price than other competing brands. So in buying a new car, it is still only getting the best deal but also the brand of car you choose that is very important.

Aside from dominating the local automotive market, the Toyota Camry is America's best selling car and its Corolla is the world's best selling car in history. Americans car buyers look into the Kelley Blue Book value as a leading provider of new car prices, used car values, car reviews and according to the U.S. Walker Research Industries, Inc., in a recent Automotive Website Usefulness Study, its website KBB.com is the most useful automotive information website among new and used vehicle shoppers, and half of America's online vehicle shoppers visit KBB.com. It publishes the annual Kelley Blue Book Best Resale Value Awards recognizing automakers' outstanding achievements in producing new vehicles that best maintain their appeal after five years of ownership.

It's not surprising that Toyota and Lexus won KBB's "Best Resale Value" for "Best Brand" and "Best Luxury Brand" for 2010 respectively, as Toyota has been a benchmark for quality for over half a century of presence in the US market. While the two-decade-old presence of Lexus is considered short in US terms, it has cultivated other brands with a proven track record of quality and reliability even in the shorter used car/pre-owned luxury market. Despite the negative media hype on quality issues in the last couple of years, Toyota and Lexus cars have managed to enjoy a good market share and still considered to be highly desired for the new and used car market segments.

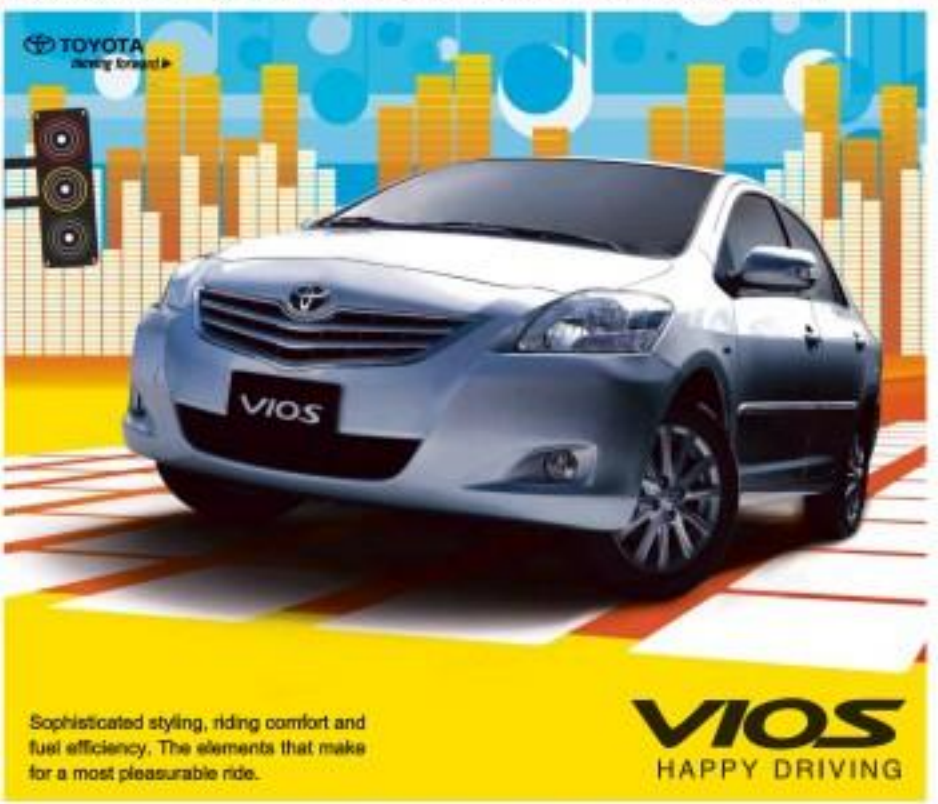
Citing quality, dependability and reliability as key reasons why the Toyota Camry is the best-selling car in the history of the world, it has been a proven formula for strong resale values. With a more financially discerning American market, it's not surprising to see continued success for a brand that's built a strong reputation as a smart buy. As for the Lexus badge, the Kelley Blue Book's First Best Resale Value Award for any luxury brand, it anchored on Toyota's reputation for quality that's positively enmeshed in the industry. Lexus owners also frequently rate the dealership experience as a key component to drive satisfaction and one of the reasons their next car will also carry the Lexus badge. Recently, Lexus has begun to build repair its foundation of quality by reducing its lineup with more style and performance. In the given common American auto market, Lexus also offers more hybrid models than any other automaker.

Toyota also had the most number of category wins in 2010 KBB resale value awards citing the Prius, Tacoma and RAV4 as the top 10 cars with most resale values. The awards are based on the publication's projection of how well new models are expected to retain their original list price after five years of ownership. The average vehicle is expected to retain only about one-third of its original value after five years. Toyota's batting average has yielded higher than average results, allowing it to be cited as America's top brand and some of its models projected to enjoy a higher resale value.

In a recent publication however, Toyota and Lexus were narrowly edged out for the 2011 coveted year brand awards after Kelley Blue Book published the 2011 Best Resale Value Awards. According to Kelley Blue Book's editors, this year's race was very close, with last year's winners, Toyota and Lexus, barely missing the podium. However, two Toyota and two Lexus models made it to the 2011 top 10 rankings as best resale value winners, dominating the top 10 list in the 2011 Toyota Tacoma, with its reliable performance combined with ruggedness, it is the resale value and ride leader in the competitive mid-size pickup segment in the US. It is also the Tacoma's 9th Best Resale Value Award to a row. Aside from this, other 2011 winners were the Toyota FJ Cruiser, the Lexus IS and GX models.

"Vehicle depreciation is important because it can be one of the biggest expenses during the first five years of ownership if you do not choose wisely. And it is something that most people don't consider when they are looking at cost of ownership, because buying a new vehicle is a pretty smart in and exciting thing to do," said James Bell, executive market analyst for the service's Web site.

Since 1926, Kelley Blue Book, The Trusted Resource, has provided vehicle buyers and sellers with the new- and used-vehicle information they need to accomplish their goals with confidence. The company's top-rated services, www.kbb.com, provides the most up-to-date pricing and values, including the Fair Purchase Price, which reports what smart buyers are paying for new cars. The company also reports vehicle pricing and values via products and services, including software products and the Kelley Blue Book Official Guide.



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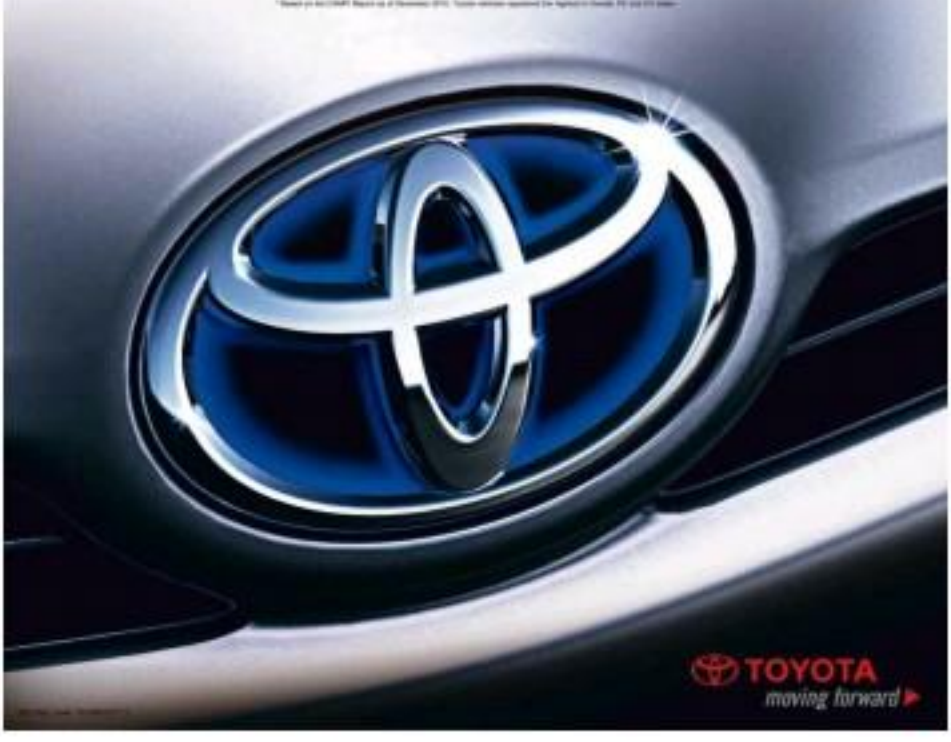

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THE NEW Clinique Chubby Stick Moisturizing Lip Colour Balm

Still allergy-free after all these years

After over four decades, Clinique still boasts some of the most stringent testing standards in the market —each product is applied 12 times on 600 people

By Cherie V. Hurst

HYPOALLERGENIC. Natural. Organic.

These are labels on skincare and cosmetic products that either confuse or are often misunderstood by even the novices of cosmetics.

Poison Ivy, as one cosmetics company points out, is natural, but you would never consciously rub it against your skin, as it's obviously an allergen. Lye is, by definition, organic, but would you really want it on your face?

That because something is organic doesn't mean it's safe," says Paul Martin, Clinique managing director for Asia Pacific. Born in Scotland, Martin started as a pharmacist before working his way up in the cosmetics industry.

"For example, there's cinnamon. It's natural, and can be grown organically. A lot of brands use it for lip glosses because it dilates the blood vessels on the lips and plumps them up. But we don't, because it causes allergic reactions in some people. We have very high standards, so that even if

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DAY 2, FEBRUARY 6

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How to keep hair color from fading, lips from drying

IT'S EASY way to get a makeover is to change your hair color. It can instantly warm up or soften your look by playing up your skin tone and bringing out your features.

But when your hair suddenly resembles copper wires or contrasts after only a few weeks of coloring it, you may be wondering just how to effect or staying out in the sun too long. Here's what you can do to preserve your hair color and smoothen chapped lips.

Why does my hair color lighten after only a few weeks of coloring it? What can I do to prevent it from fading?

It is such a treat to get hair colored at a salon, especially at to working with a great colorist. Getting the color you want lends a boost of confidence that will have you strutting your stuff out of the salon and straight to a dinner with friends. How else do you show off your new 'do?).

But after a few weeks, you find and your happiness is short-lived when you notice the brassy tones your hair has developed. No, it is no longer the color you once loved, but a lighter, coppery version that only seems to look worse every day.

Now it's got you thinking, "Was there something I did or didn't do that caused this to happen?"

Actually, yes—there are ways to extend the life of your hair color and prevent it from fading. The first few weeks are crucial to keeping your hair from getting lighter. Your hair should be given time to "set," but you just all that time and money spent at the salon to waste.

Timing is everything. The sun, saltwater and chlorine are three of the harshest elements for hair color. It is wise to schedule your hair appointment around a time when you'll be attending a pool party or going in the beach. Similarly, exposing your hair to chemically damaged hair. Weekly treatments will prevent hair from drying out.

Hold off on the shampoo. If you're the type to wash your hair everyday, you may want to rethink that after going for a color job. Water tends to strip off your hair color more than the sun, saltwater or chlorine because it comes in contact with your hair everyday. Water also weakens your hair, so it's best to shampoo only every other day to preserve your color.

Keep it low. While we may be a little overeager to style our hair after getting a great color, remember that heat is more prone to damage and breakage after dyeing it. Adjusting your heat dryer to a low or cool setting will keep heat from drying out. And while you're at it, minimize the use of straightening irons and curlers.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Kelly Misa

Avoid the sun, sea and daily shampooing

My lips are always dry and chapped. **how do I remedy this and keep them soft?**

Brushing your lips with a soft, wet toothbrush is an easy way to slough away flaky skin on your lips. Then apply a lip balm with shea butter or beeswax to keep them moisturized.

Another way to soften lips if you have a little time on your hands is by mixing honey with sugar and using the mixture to massage your lips. Honey acts as a natural moisturizer while sugar will gently exfoliate dry skin.

To make sure your lips are super-soft the whole day, apply a generous amount of lip conditioner before you sleep. This moisturizes your lips for a good night boost, so you'll wake up with smooth, healthy-looking lips.

Got a beauty question? E-mail ask.ladymixx@gmail.com.

Iza and Stephanie's top waterproof makeup picks

IT MAY not rain on your wedding day or Valentine's, but chances are, there will be one big water-related obstacle you'll have to deal with: rain, and plenty of them.

One can choose to juggle between conventional makeup removers and the waterproof makeup. You can avoid a makeup meltdown by choosing products that are long-wearing and water-resistant.

Well-applied waterproof makeup lasts all day and isn't affected by any external factors such as sweat, perspiration, moisture or even water. It's designed not to run, smear or come off, even when wet. It comes in handy in places with humid weather, such as the Philippines, where makeup tends to run and smudge.

Female athletes use waterproof makeup to prevent their makeup from being ruined by perspiration. Actresses use it, too, since it is unaffected by tears. Even runners on reunion carry waterproof makeup since it is a good way to look dewy for photos without having to sacrifice precious time retouching.

BACKSTAGE PASS

Isabel Rucas

Most cosmetics like those have a oily, cry-based oil in consistency, called dimethicone. This helps in keeping the skin soft. It also assists in allowing smooth application of the products.

A waterproof version of the same oil, called dimethicone copolyol, is used in waterproof cosmetics and is formulated to adhere to the skin and hair. This is present in a wide range of waterproof cosmetics, from mascara to foundation to eyebrow pencil.

To avoid damaging your skin, wash gently with a cleanser

No ugly marks

So, with the temperature these days at a record high, one wouldn't need it to stay important for them to feel comfortable, even when outside. Those active women talk about their favorite water, sweat and sunscreen-proof makeup.

"I use a lot of waterproof makeup because I live in Singapore. It's best for my warm/tropical climate and lets me do my job (which is on cry!) without having to worry about ugly mascara marks."—Ina Galvante, actress.

"My favorite waterproof makeup is the full-scale Maybelline's Volume Express mascara and MAC's liquid last liner. Once put on, it doesn't smudge. You can have a full day at work, go dancing, swimming and even pool, they resist salt-effluvia, too. Ultra Shine Dry Touch Sunblock, P600/25, and Ultra Shine Powerlight Lotion, P400.

IZA CALZADO

STEPHANIE Klenky Sabino, Neutrogena Ultra Sheer Dry-Touch Sunblock

More tips

Waterproof makeup can be difficult to remove. To avoid damaging your skin, use gentle, oil-free remover specially designed for waterproof makeup. Avoid waterproof makeup if you have very sensitive skin or are prone to acne. Swimming for long periods with facial makeup can clog the pores and cause breakouts.

To be on the safe side, carry a makeup bag for touch-ups. Skip applying your makeup **will keep your face looking** fresh at the beach or pool, while you remember to remove you get caught in the rain.

With the right formulas and a few tome steps, you can be reasonably sure that your beauty or sweat won't make your manners run, your eye shadow bleed or your foundation smudge.

How to find your personal scent

PACKAGING is clean and simple.

SOPHISTICATED all over at Queen na Rosario Maria!

FRAGRANCE is a very personal thing. There is no guarantee that if it smells great on people you know, it will also be great on you as well.

One really has to personally try on the scent, dab it on your wrist and walk around with it for 30 minutes to smell itself. Doing it on a Monday isn't gift may be risky if the intended recipient hasn't really tried it personally beforehand—or at least someone like him who could do testing for him.

Art of Scent at Rustan's Makati store is ready fragrance shopping pleasurable since again and it's the first of its kind in the Philippines. There are two Explorer "bars"—one for men and the other for women, with basic notes divided into four basic families: fresh, woody, oriental and floral.

One preferred fragrances during my lifetime have something in common, and if we want to try something new, chances are we should narrow down the search to these families. Mine turned out to be fruity florals with citrus undertones.

Now their style of selling is the opposite of typical counters. Gone are the perfume mavy-women who accost you in the mall, waving testing strips under your nose.

It was Kyle who assisted me, very patiently, I may add, through my choices. After an hour in the store, I narrowed it down to Antique Accords Blossom, Encanto Shine and Ralph Lauren's Big Pony 1—which I have to say is far more than I could see myself wearing.

Kyle insisted I spray them on my pulse points and walk around for 20 minutes and until, sure enough, the Big Pony 1 smelled masculine as it ran it.

I still could not choose between Cielo and Encanto Shine, so I dragged my hubby in and asked him to pick which smelled better on me.

He picked Neutrogena Encanto Shine, with its bergamot, pineapple, peach and cedar.

Now do not go there and buy my choice. I urge you instead to take note of your favorite scents over the years, including those you get the most compliments on.

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

For stressed skin

It's between 8 14°C here in Hong Kong as I type this, and my skin has gone sure wires 48 hours of being here.

Neutrogena had sent me its Pure Fortune whitening mask before I flew out and said I plead I brought it with me. The contents could make my skin dry, tight, flaky, red and cracked on some parts, and dull in others.

On my third evening, I cleansed my face, applied the fine fairness toner and slapped on the mask till it dried up. As I peeled it off I made it a point not to touch the residue off and not add anything above it.

The next morning my skin was soothed, even toned, soft, hydrated and silky. The redness had subsided and the peeling/flaking halted.

My skin has been in this simple-but, powerful glory for three days now after just one mask application.

I recommend this for those who love the beach as well, as extreme temperature change wreaks havoc on everyone's skin.

E-mail the author at kmyo-lai@gmail.com.

Berries and yogurt are effective skin care ingredients

DO YOU have skin that's dull, dry, tough, or flaky? The lack of vitality and the effects of fatigue on the skin cannot be removed with makeup. When the skin loses its moisture due to dry weather, UV rays and stress, the skin accumulates dead skin cells. This over-accumulation of dead skin cells on the skin's deeper layers. This is why you need to exfoliate to be able to moisturizing and nourishing the skin.

The Lavaje Mulberry Yogurt Line contains natural berry extracts and fermented soy milk extracts to moisturize skin smoothing while exfoliating. The Berry Shield, extracted from various berries with strong anti-oxidizing capacities, clears the skin of harmful free radicals, while hugging a purely natural ingredient acquired by fermenting soy milk with enzymes and lactic acid bacteria, contains various vitamins and moisturizing factors for firmer and healthier skin.

LAVAJE Clear-C Effector

Lavaje Multi-berry Yogurt Peeling Gel is a mild scrub that exfoliates dead skin cells with a simple massage. Natural enzyme clears off dead skin cells and fermented yogurt strengthens the skin's defense system.

After exfoliating, use the Lavaje Mulberry Yogurt Repair Pack, which supplies highly concentrated moisturizer for smooth texture. Vitamin C in the smooth-ing mask smoothens the skin and eliminates remaining dead skin cells.

It's a wide world

Mabuhay!

Jenni J. Epperson

Incorporate fashion's future easily into your wardrobe with forgiving wide-leg pants

IN THE not-so-distant past, the future was a science-fiction "fantasia." Though it didn't make much of an impression on consumers the world over, it seems to have made waves of a diner in the fashion world.

Just take a look at designer Rodarte's Spring Collection, which drew on the architectural shapes of the movie's imagined dystopian society to elevate collars and a shoulder-to-collarbone flounce over the former perfect vessel of fashion's revolutionary.

Staying longer into fashion's crystal ball, we see a hint of the next season's silhouettes and a dismissal of the current obsession with the skinny leg. In fact, it's moving in the opposite orbit.

The forecast is a wide, wide world...wide leg trousers to go with shoulder pads to create more geometric silhouettes. So it's not exactly the major space suit that is in store for the fashion future, but the angular, edgy nod of the next millennium.

The geometric silhouettes can be seen on the runways of Hermès and Louis Vuitton. He's bi-colored woman wore a pantsuit and her collared coats, subtle tweeds naturally drew on the asymmetrical silhouettes of sharp tailored jackets, but ramped up with second skin leather for a slightly feminine appeal.

My last tip to incorporate this geometric sensibility into your wardrobe is to invest in a great pair of wide-leg trousers. The tip side is that wide leg pants are so much more forgiving than your skinnys or leggings. To give them a more feminine appeal, wear them with fit, flirty blouses and platform wedges, as seen on these pages. They're versatile enough to go from boardroom to cocktail lounge.

Get inspired with these wide-leg looks that bring past and future to the present.

Visit http://urbanjennie.blogspot.com and follow me on Twitter.com/jennieppers

Still allergy-free after all these years

Photograph #11

It's natural, if it doesn't pass our allergy system, we don't use it."

Clinique claims to have very stringent allergy testing: Each product is applied 12 times on 600 people—or 7,200 applications—with a standard of zero reactions. Each product is labeled "Allergy Tested," not "Hypoallergenic" or some other brands. It's Clinique's assurance that being hypoallergenic—which, by definition, means the allergic response is reduced or minimized, as the product contains fewer potential irritants—is just the first step toward being completely safe.

As some Engenioses can also be irritants, Clinique has always claimed to be 100-percent Engenioses-free.

CLINIQUE customers are stranded in by white lab-coated skin consultants, such as this one at the newly opened satellite counter in Trinoma (above). In March, the brand will unveil the Clarifying Lotion Twice A Day Exfoliator that's formulated for Asian skin (below).

PAUL Stern, Clinique managing director for Asia-Pacific

AN AGE-DEFY POLLUTION SPF 40 sunblock coming in May. Below, a mascara for lashes, available in April

More relevant

The brand started by Estée Lauder in 1968 has essentially not changed its tack since then. It pioneer in dermatologist-developed skincare, Sheets says the brand's initial claim is even more relevant today than it was when Clinique first came out on the market many years ago, "because women now have greater understanding of skincare."

He adds, "If you balance the brand's heritage with technological innovation and advancement, that's quite powerful. We think there's still a place for that."

Over a decade ago, the brand also started creating specific products for the Asian market, now totaling 40 percent of the entire line. This wasn't simply because Asia now accounts for a big chunk of the global revenue, Sheets clarifies, but also because "scientifically, Asian hair's been found to have thinner skins than Caucasians and are more prone to sensitivities."

While Clinique has never attempted to be hip, it has kept up with skincare trends. Its long-time "3-Step Skin Care," consisting of a soap, clarifying lotion and moisturizer, is still a top seller. But it has also included on the product line an oil-controlling line called Derma White. Its claim is that, unlike others, it's non-abrasive.

Most skin whitening creams have hydroquinone, an effective ingredient, but one which may be harsh to those with sensitive skin.

"We've been able to prove that our formula, which doesn't have hydroquinone, is just as effective, but is completely safe," Sheets says.

Value for money

Late last year, Clinique also unveiled an anti-aging system called Repairwear Laser Focus, clinical results of which are equivalent to 45 percent of a Fraxel treatment, according to Sheets. For value-conscious Filipinos, he hastens to add, this is a lot, since they don't need to buy a separate eye treatment as it's safe for the eye area, as well.

"Consumers are sophisticated by products from so many brands," he notes. "Some of the messages are too good to be true. At Clinique, we like to under-promise and over-deliver. If you buy a product that claims revolutionary breakthrough and it doesn't deliver, you won't buy it again. We've also long-term relationships with customers. We don't make claims we can't back up." This, he adds, has kept Clinique "the No. 1 premium cosmetics brand in the world in terms of sales, unit and volume."

In the Philippines, it's exclusively distributed by Rustan's and is available at all Rustan's branches, Marionnaud in SM Mall of Asia, and at the newly opened Clinique satellite counter at the Mitchiam Wing of Trinoma in Quezon City.

Familiarity with a brand that has remained true to its roots has kept Clinique customers loyal the world over. Its core sale, he reassures, haven't changed since the beginning: no celebrity endorsers, just clean, close-up shots of the products against a white background. If packaging has changed, it's only ever so slightly, and only in the last few years.

"We believe the product is the hero of the brand, so we've never resorted to celebrity endorsements," Stern explains. "There's always a plan for brands like us that can talk about the efficacy of our products and will arbe you need and no more. We're the only 100-percent fragrance-free, allergy-tested brand. That's our lockstock. That's where we started, and that's where we will continue to be."

THE WINNING face of Miss Dinagyang 2011, Samantha Marie Amparo, in a swimsuit and gown by Renee Salud and Aisha Penaloza

THE WOMEN behind Miss Dinagyang 2011, Sarah D. Peña, Beverly "Pangging" Rosales and Cherie Gervacio-Roa

ABS-CBN Ilonggo Dinagyang Ambassador Bb Mercado (Box Office Entertainment Marketer and deputy secretary for Administration and Financial Services of the Philippine Senate Lawyer Aimee Ruiz

MISS Dinagyang 2011 4th runner-up Marianne Bermudez, 2nd runner-up Sigrid Grace Pearce, 1st runner-up Kyle Shenaid and 3rd runner-up Lhorren Pascuito

Beauty, brains and social advocacy at Miss Dinagyang 2011

FLAWLESS beauty Marianne Bermudez and Pammy Ely

BUSINESSWOMAN Judge Lopez Peña

JUDGES Hiyas Paloma and Mags Corr of Magnolia

MASCOT sponsor Jen Vitto and Joseph S. Tecoy of Watsons

1ST RUNNER-UP Kyle Shenaid with Smart's Heller Cuadra

MANCA Valeria

PDTE Jess Epperson

STYLISTS Pura Quinsaat and Bea Cantalejo

ROSSANA Arroyo

DONNA Cuna-Pita

Without batting an eyelash

Beatrice Arnaldo

Photos by Alex Yan Hagnin
powered by INNER PEACE FARMS

ILOILO is renowned for its celebrations of different festivals, particularly, but the most highly organized and anticipated is the awesome Dinagyang of Iloilo City, consistently named as "the Best Tourism Event of the Philippines," by the Association of Tourism Officers of the Philippines (ATOP).

Highlight of the festival, aside from the Ati-atihan and Binirayan Tribe competitions, is the Miss Iloilo Dinagyang Pageant, where our Ilonggo beauties display their talent, poise and intelligence.

This year's Miss Iloilo Dinagyang Pageant 2011 manages a smashing success, brilliantly headed by new organizers, the ATPI Best Productions, led by top Iloilo civic leaders Sarah D. Peña and Beverly "Pangging" Rosales, who presided as all-new concepts.

With the theme "Our Nation, Our Dinagyang," this was no ordinary beauty contest.

"We wanted to show that a modern woman is not simply limited to beauty and brains but, given equal importance to social responsibility through the pageant's advocacy of women's and children's rights," said Sarah Peña.

The board of judges was composed of very credible persons, led by Sen. Loren Legarda, to less the headed the board whom members included entrepreneur Griselda Belo Brosseau, former model and TV celebrity Audrey Tan-Belmes, 1992 Mr. Filipino-Universe Glen Brewster-Salud, Iloilo commercial model Hegz Lopez Colpitos-Cue, former deputy secretary Arael Belmes, fashion designer Nonie Pedrosa, advertising practitioner and 2011 executive Emmanuel Martinez, Dinagyang Heiress and ABS-CBN Iloilo's News Today society columnist and Philippine Tatler correspondent Tessy Tirtorahardjo, who stood in for the

The three special suits the striking symbiosis of Mags Bautista and fashion designer Renee Salud, who favored the nati-

Hedi Ng, Alex Benito-Cuenca, Daryll Chong, Frances Sales and Nikki Santiago. They checked during the afternoon tea party at Renee Peninsula's terraced retreat to entertain the young women of fashion, challenge,

Shang thanks retailers

Shangri-La Plaza hosted a grand finale for its retail partners.

Lala Prats, SVP and general manager of the hotel, expressed thanks to the retailers "Shangri-La's infrastructure, architecture and impressive growth over the past year can be largely attributed to the Shangri-La retail community's ability to constantly provide customers with fresh, new and innovative concepts."

"We are poised to approach the Shang's third decade with great confidence that we will emerge more dynamic, more relevant, and definitely much stronger than we have ever been," she added.

During the occasion, there was overflowing wine and other spirits and yummy finger food from the hotel's different outlets.

Vienna concert

The Johann Strauss Society of the Philippines is holding its traditional New Year's Vienna Concert on Feb. 9, 7 p.m., at the Iloilo Ice Arena.

The concert organizing committee of JSSP president Olga Severino Montes, Hilda Hew and Betty Chua co-chairpersons, Lorraine Ledesma and Agnes Hollweber.

Those women of substance have announced that for the second, Austrian conductor Dr. Ernest Hauer, will be joined in from Vienna by members of the Manila Symphony Orchestra.

The beneficiary is the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, for the upgrading of its musical instruments, and the General Ballegas Scholarship Fund.

Tickets at P1,500 and P3,000 include dinner and concert. Tickets for the upper gallery are at P1,500 each.

More info? Contact Angie or Tessie at 033.336.9000 and 0918.501.

TREASURER Marissa Segovia and president Ramon Cancio-ata of Iloilo Dinagyang Foundation Inc.

MISS Dinagyang 2011 pageant host Dennis Ramos

ILOILO society columnist and Philippine Tatler correspondent Money Tirtorahardjo with the Reader's Choice Award to Lhorren Pascuito.

SISTERS Rica and Sica Pena

STRIKING comedienne for the JSSP Vienna New Year concert 2011, Betty Chua, Pamela Ledesma, Olga Severino Montes (president), Hilda Hew and Agnes Hollweber.

SHANG Operations division manager engineer Leo Dayrit, Imperial Manor's Rebecca Chuanco, Shang Marketing division manager Marina Dinsay and Sonia Sun's Betty Lucero.

OFFICE Warehouse's George Lorenzana, Bakers Fresh's Eva Lorenzana and Shang's Michelle Sison.

SHANG'S Hazel del Castillo and Midori Tamaro-Huang of Ramon's Department Store Stores Specialists Inc.

SHANG Properties' Vincent Ng, Bruce Qiwy Qu, Shang SVP/GM Lala Prats, Charlene and Alda Colombini, Hank Seung's Wilfred Woo, Jocelyn Dee Law of CB Bar and Restaurant, Shang Properties' Vince Fonseca and Johnny Columbini

SHANG'S Mimi Tenson and Lala Prats (right) with Grace Qiwy Qu

HUNTLY and daughter of Doreen Tiaco Go (with Shang's Ate Aiden)

JOHN Galliano for Dior re-animated Christian Dior's archival looks of the '50s is rendered by illustrator Rana Gran, photographers Irving Penn and Richard Avedon, and model Suzy Parker. A degrade dress-of-the-day-to-graphite evening dress (*leftmost*) features a hooded surreal skirt and a bodice with an asymmetric neckline. Hats are by Stephen Jones. A full-skirted suit (*left*) in red taffeta changes color in adding black tulle. Crystal headwraps (*above*) highlight the cutaway jacket. Black sequin strokes recall Gran's bold sketches.

FIT for attending two royal weddings this year are creations by designers Pier Paolo Piccioli and Maria Grazia Chiuri for Valentino. The Valentino hat is inspired by a Botticelli (*topmost*) and a Gainsborough chiffon day dress (*above*) with a pleated skirt.

In Paris, creations beautiful and wearable

By Larry Levanon
Contributor

IF IT'S a marvelous coincidence that there will be two royal weddings this year, one in London and another in Monaco? The fashion houses on display in these events might well come from this season's signature looks.

Judging from the Paris runway shows of Dior, Valentino, Chanel, Armani and Gaultier, there's something beautiful and wearable for everyone, from church lady-like to evening cocktail gloss.

At Chanel, Karl Lagerfeld has two silhouettes—A-line skirts, jackets or dresses with slim black jeans or bare legs, all worn with pointy flat shoes; the ethnic beaded tops with skinny jeans in modern denim; and the Chanel gilt buttons on the hem, everything glowing in pink with luminous headwraps of silver or gold.

John Galliano at Dior showed arched styles inspired by illustrator Rana Gran, which were airy and dream, woven in lines of restrained embroidery and decoration. Dominant were degrade shades from red to black, pale blue to caramel, cream to pink, with just the right amount of sequins and eyepeak in black.

To achieve the chanteuse effect, up to seven layers of seamstring tulle were sewn into cloud-like jackets, with a corseted waist either flaring into a full balloon or narrowing into an ice-blues length.

Pier Piccioli and Maria Chiuri at Valentino also found their center in a collection of pale pink, blush and nude, with airy ruffles and just enough hints to show the label's signature. The was a pretty and wearable collection, many of which will end up at the royal weddings.

It was Antonio Pitti and Gaultier who showed very modern and bold couture. The basic, plump fabrications and sculptural forms by Giorgio Armani were in monotone colors. The sharp, whittled-down lines on the body with metallic hats by Stephen Jones were positively and glamorous.

Gaultier "got no attention", only the voice of Catherine Deneuve calling out each creation, with models holding up numbers. Mostly in black, the collection distilled Jean-Paul's patterned looks into a tightly edited, very light and perfectly executed collection.

Maybe it was his departure from Hermès, or a preparation for his 40-year retrospective, but this one Gaultier at his finest. Bravo bone.

KARL Lagerfeld for Chanel presented camo-washed denim jeans with fitted and gilt buttons on the hem, pointed flats and a ready-to-shrug and modern take on pink tweed suits, gauzy tulle and beaded T-shirts.

JEAN Paul Gaultier, who hailed from Hermès and is readying for his 40-year retrospective, turned the volume down in his collection, with Catherine Deneuve calling out each number—yet the dresses spoke volumes. Inspired by royal punk and the cancan, this is quintessential Gaultier, (*top*) a sassy fringed dress in cobalt and (*right*) a printed chiffon gown.

GIORGIO Armani for Armani Privé had watered-glass window colors in techno-sparkle that had the dawn of summer to a point. His silhouettes were lean and sculptural, nodding to early Pierre Cardin. The collection was austere and minimal, bare of any accessories except hats by Philip Treacy, that elevating the focus on the women's body.

SHOPWISE helps himself to morning's fresh catch. FOOD "solutions" for shoppers, particularly working moms. SIMPLY "Soda Fountain" FRESH and in season DISCOUNTED specials are written on yellow signages along store's main alley.

Huge new hypermarket in San Pedro offers the 'total shopping experience'

REDWORKS arranged according to user and malady they were made to address

By Alex Y. Vergara

SHOPWISE, THE pioneer in hypermarket shopping in the Philippines, recently opened its ninth branch in San Pedro, Laguna. Like its first store, which opened in Alabang 11 years ago, Shopwise's newest outlet offers shoppers a number of firsts meant to make hypermarket shopping easier, faster and more pleasant.

For one, it's the biggest Shopwise branch to date, with a shopping space of 4,500 sq m. This excludes space allotted for management in a number of tenants, including BPO, Mommy Dearest and eatery food kiosks, to give customers a "total shopping experience."

Retail management, led by Donnie Tantoco, president of Rustan's Supermarket, Inc., has built the structure from the ground up on a vacant lot in Barangay Landayan (along San Pedro's national highway), it was able to come up with a store that will henceforth be the model for future Shopwise stores.

Tantoco said with Cookbits, now at the helm of Pavilion Hypermarket, transformed their brand of hypermarket shopping to 10 times in the late '90s. It was only a matter of time before competitors started following their lead.

Tantoco hopes to double the number of Shopwise branches to 18 in the next two to three years. Before the year is over, Shopwise will open in Cebu, its first store outside Luzon. Davao "is also on our radar," Tantoco said.

Over and above the primary purpose of serving the public and generating returns, ships with suppliers, Tantoco says Shopwise as a whole is for fulfilling a higher purpose: spreading wealth and creating permanent jobs.

"We provide 3,000 jobs today," he said. "Our audacious goal is, by the end of 2020, to reach the 100,000 job mark."

DONNIE Tantoco, president of Rustan's Supermarket Inc., shows Shopwise's latest baby in San Pedro Mayor Calixto Catapang.

Just like big supermarkets abroad, such as Wal-Mart and Carrefour, the well-lit and fully air-conditioned Shopwise San Pedro did away with a second level. The fewer escalators(s) to scurry(s) or a mall(s) to traverse(s) by a series of narrower ones, lined with shelves upon shelves of neatly arranged and carefully-labelled goods.

To give you an idea, the pharmacy section—now found in almost all Shopwise branches—is bigger, and carries over the-counter medicines classified not according to brands or manufacturers, but according to the condition or malady they address.

The store is not without its share of gimmicks. A '50s-style American diner—tongue dubbed Soda Fountain—comes complete with bar stools, tasty hamburgers and humungous mugs of Coca-Cola. An old-fashioned jukebox is on its way from the US.

"Shopping for groceries is basically like doing the laundry," said Tantoco in an exclusive interview. "It has become a chore. Our goal is to make that chore efficient and easy. On top of that, it also has to be pleasant and enjoyable."

Tantoco, who welcomed suppliers and members of the media to the exclusive launch, deemed the occasion a significant step in Shopwise's continuing evolution. This newest branch, he said, is an attempt to go back and reconnect with Shopwise's DNA of blazing a trail while providing "quality for all."

"Three years ago, at the height of the global financial crisis, we responded by changing the way Shopwise operates," he explained. "We made Shopwise a price price and discount player. It pulled us out of the crisis, but it also plunged the Shopwise brand into a sea of sameness within the market."

Shopwise has fallen squarely from all that. In a nutshell, the company's new thrust is about expansion and differentiation.

"Expansion is about quality and productivity of sights. Differentiation is about innovation in areas where we can help meet unmet or underserved needs, particularly of working mothers, our primary customers," he said.

Apart from being the benchmark for luxury stores, Shopwise San Pedro is also the first store with Switch Senses, Shopwise CEO Lim found.

A retail industry veteran with 17 years of experience behind him, the Belgium-born Simon joined Shopwise in April after stints in Carrefour and Profitshop in China and Hong Kong.

"This is the first store I've done since joining the company," he said. "However, all the concepts you see will be gradually rolled out to the other stores. This isn't an experiment, because I've worked around these concepts before."

Bold signages are designed not only to help customers save time and energy, but also to help them make the right choices. The milk section, for instance, is arranged based on the kind of milk a particular shopper is looking for.

Simon also introduced the practice of highlighting "specials" using yellow signages to attract customers' attention. All items discounted items are also featured in Shopwise's flyers and catalogs, which the company sends on e-mails to its regular customers upon request.

"When they get here after going through the catalog at home, they could immediately start with their shopping rather than wasting time checking out the entire store," he said.

Prices of discounted items are compared to their regular prices when not on sale. On the left side of such signages, written in smaller numerals, is the amount the customer saves on a particular item. Regular items are also displayed in specific spaces.

"This store may be the new model, but it doesn't mean we just copy and paste in the future," said Simon. "Some of these retail practices may have worked abroad, but we cater everything based on local needs. And local needs vary from city to city even in the same country."

Prior to signing up with Shopwise, Simon, 50 and a bachelor, had never been to the country. A lot went into his decision to leave China for the Philippines, but Tantoco's positive outlook made it easier for him to really pack his bags and give it a try.

"I've never been such a boss," he said of Tantoco. "He's truly someone with values, someone who really cares for his people. We never lay off our people after Typhoon Ondoy and later three again later. We want our people to grow with us. If the people who work for you are happy, this is incontrovertibly reflected in customer service."

SHOPWISE San Pedro is the look of things to come, as Shopwise continues to expand and break new ground.

SHOPWISE sales personnel, ready to serve

At 4,500 sq m, it's Shopwise's biggest branch to date, and president Donnie Tantoco hopes to make the 'chore' of shopping 'efficient and enjoyable again'

Immaculate Conception Academy marks 75th year; blind piano prodigy to open Alabang concert season

ALABANG, Muntinlupa, parents, students and missionaries of the immaculate conception (MIC) will take part in the joyous celebration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of Immaculate Conception Academy in Greenhills, San Juan.

ICA is fundamentally a missionary school rooted in its history of teaching children, specifically Chinese Catholic girls, about God. But the work of the MIC nuns, whose mother house is in Bloomingdale, Canada, is also economic, "with an eye toward living on the future," Ate Helen Yanatta Cornell, MIC, administrator for finance and development, points. "We constantly evaluate and incorporate new methods to equip students with the tools to keep up with changing times."

This year's celebration opens today, Feb. 4, with a Holy Mass at the ICA chapel at 8:45 a.m. Invitation followed by an audio-visual screening prepared by the Parent Council, presenting memories of the ICA alumnae (known as Isa Lhods, "A Cut Above") blessing of the players to Assist of the ICA Scholarship Foundation, and lunch.

Other activities lined up for the year include the 75th founding anniversary exhibit and ICA open house in September, a Treasure-nation from October to December, a Marian exhibit in October, a Christmas concert and the search for "Teacher of the Year" in December. Closing ceremonies are programmed for Oct. 3.

Fil-Jest features pianist Ilay

Ayala Cultural Foundation, with Insular Life, will open its fourth season, "Alchemia," tomorrow, with a concert by Carlos Alberto Ilay, a blind pianist based in Virginia, USA.

An inspiring and charming Filipino, Ilay is an exceptionally talented pianist, also gifted with a rich tenor voice. He made his solo debut at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Main Theater in 2004. He speaks seven languages fluently and he learns everything by ear, because he was blind since birth. He has performed in five continents.

Ilay makes his orchestral debut in the Philharmonic on Feb. 5, 8 p.m. He performs Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 23 in addition to singing arias, Neapolitan songs and Kundiman, all with the Manila Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Arturo Molina.

The concert will be at the Insular Life Auditorium, Insular Life Corporate Center, Ayala Triangle Complex, Makati.

Tickets are at P800 and P400. Contact 891-7401-1001, 0918-847-4672 or 481-3823.

Dance concert

Yolanda Manding Albano, president of the College of the Holy Spirit Alumni Association (CHSAA), will lead school-mates in the "Spirit of the Dance" dance reunion on Feb. 6, Friday at 6 p.m. at the North Greenhills Clubhouse on Johnson St. to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the College of the Holy Spirit Manila. Alumni from the Philippines and the Peninsula Island with Eli Mata. CHS alumni are invited to come. Dinner tickets will be available at the gate.

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

Sweet concoctions

Warm up to a white cropped top that turns an subtle sexiness when paired with cream pants.

White mesh flower top, Chris Dina; cream bird over harem pants, Cutie Femme at Rustan's; brass cuffs with semiprecious stones wrapped in satin ribbon, Eric Manansala; beaded beige platform heels, Schutz at Aduva

Earthy emotions

A brown jersey cocktail dress gets a dash of oomph from adornments.

Brown jersey tube dress with macrame neckline, Mimic Lachica; brass cuffs with semiprecious stones wrapped in satin ribbon, Eric Manansala; brown beaded fringe heels, MICHAEL Michael Kors

The art of femininity

For a truly inspired Valentine's wardrobe, get swept off your feet with creamy tones and soft touches, set against the romantic vistas of Pinto Gallery in Antipolo

A woman's choice

Channeling the heroines of "Mad Men," A-line skirts and crocheted tops add effortless excitement to an evening.

Cream crocheted top, Promod; cream A-line skirt, Soaked in Luxury at Aduva; brass multilayer chain breastt necklace by Eric Manansala

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

A-LIGA — BY JOEL MERINA

PUGAD BABOY — BY PIN JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEBYKITS — BY ELIZABETH CHOONGLO

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

KIKO MACHINE — BY MARK ASHER

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

EYRA — BY ED BELLO & ED RAYOS

SHERMAN'S LAGOON — BY JIM TOOMEY

TULOKIK — BY MARK COLL

Loading, making up stories as ECTB 409 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Loans hanggang 30pesitos

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Communication with groups will be very strong and successful today. Make decisions and plan for the future with confidence, and you never find others will have to push for your support.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Improvements or renovations to your home are favored today. Make decisions that will reflect your taste but remember to consult with others.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Make a creative day for children and romance. Those who demand the utmost will be disappointed. Be open to possibilities, however, and you'll find the right solution to your problem.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Your creative energy is at its peak today. Use it to your advantage and you'll find success. Remember to be flexible, however, and you'll find the right solution to your problem.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Communication with partners and close friends are key today. You have a chance now to express your deepest feelings and you'll find others will be receptive to your words.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Do whatever you can to get organized at work and at home. Once you start to see the efficiencies and effectiveness, you'll find the right solution to your problem.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Set some extra time to play today. Enjoy shared activities with children. See more opportunities for romance. Be open to possibilities, however, and you'll find the right solution to your problem.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Social and romantic matters are your primary concerns today. Be receptive to other's opinions and you'll find the right solution to your problem. Pay attention to your health and you'll find the right solution to your problem.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Your star is on the rise today. Make decisions that will reflect your taste but remember to consult with others. Be open to possibilities, however, and you'll find the right solution to your problem.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Pay attention to your health today. You're also entering a time when you're able to accomplish a lot. Be open to possibilities, however, and you'll find the right solution to your problem.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) You have confidence today! Be aware of this, you will be able to persuade others to agree with you. Pay attention to your health and you'll find the right solution to your problem.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Social and romantic matters are your primary concerns today. Be receptive to other's opinions and you'll find the right solution to your problem. Pay attention to your health and you'll find the right solution to your problem.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and go rogues at www.sudoku.com

Answers to previous puzzle

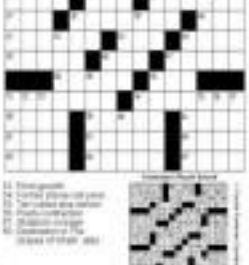
3	4	5	8	6	7	2	1	9
1	6	2	4	9	5	3	8	7
8	7	9	1	3	2	5	4	6
4	5	3	6	7	8	9	2	1
6	2	1	9	5	4	8	7	3
9	8	7	3	2	1	6	5	4
5	9	6	7	4	3	1	6	8
2	1	4	5	8	6	7	9	5
7	3	8	2	1	9	4	3	2

Concepts Sudoku — By Dave Green

			6		2			
	1				8	6		
2	9						8	
	2		5					3
				9				
7					1		2	
	8						5	9
		7	8				6	
			3		7			

Difficulty Level ★★★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Robinsons Supermarket

WOW!

Low, Low Prices!

February 4 - 17, 2011

HOT BUY

Lactacyd
Baby Wash
250ml

P159.75 each

APPLE TAG SPECIALS

Eat Well Spend Less

Endless love

Head-to-toe casual looks in warm cream spell sheer romance.

Cream puff-sleeve dress, Tyler at Adora; cream tiered crochet skirt, Sinsupreme at Rustan's; brown suede fringed shoulder bag, Topshop; camel leather platform heels, Stella Luna at Adora.

The art of femininity

From page B1

Girlish garnishes

Introduce a bit of fun to your look with frilly, flowing hems.

Beige mesh dress, Jerome Ang; brown suede shoe necklace, Eric Manuntag; brown leather fringe boots, MICHAEL Michael Kors.

Seeing through

A sheer top with embellishments makes for a truly romantic way of dressing.

Cream and gold polka dot long sleeve polo, Sinsupreme at Rustan's; cream cable-knit sweater, Wardrobe; khaki pants, Zara; white beige brass necklace and gemstone earrings multilayered brass necklace, both from Eric Manuntag; tan suede leather belt, Parfois

ENTRANCE to Fines Art Museum

SALVAGED wooden doors from different parts of Antipolo serve as adornments to the garden.

DR. JOVEN Cuasay envisioned a Spanish-Mexican-Mediterranean-inspired art museum.

ARTIST Antonio Lustre made use of the mountain's topography to design the museum.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Dennis G. Velasco

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■ **Helena Bonham Carter on being Queen Mum & partner to Tim Burton** In H'wood /E8

■ **Veteran stars teach clueless tyros real acting** Viewfinder /E2

CHEER

'Glee' star Lynch writing 'Happy Accidents' memoir

NEW YORK —The award-winning actress who plays cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester on the hit musical comedy "Glee" is writing a memoir. Publisher Hyperion announced Tuesday that Jane Lynch's "Happy Accidents" will come out in September. The 50-year-old Lynch has won an Emmy and a Golden Globe for "Glee," about a high school glee club. Her character bullies students and butts heads with the glee club members. Lynch's film credits include "Role Models" and "The 40-Year-Old Virgin" and "Julie & Julia." AP

Veteran stars teach clueless tyros real acting

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ALL YEAR ROUND
JED MADELA

FROM TIME to time, we come up with a list of outstanding but sadly overlooked and underutilized talents. Amy Austria and Ronaldo Valdez are silver on that recurring list. Well, we're happy to report that the long wait is over, because both Amy and Ronaldo are being featured in new telenovelas.

Amy is a standout talent who learned a lot about good film acting when she was directed by the late Emmanuel Borlaza, among other top-notch auteurs.

For his part, Ronaldo was directed by the "maverick" likes of Danny Zialcita and went from romantic lead to versatile character actor. Along with Dindo Fernando, he was one of the few actors in the '70s and '80s who played "flaming" gays in Zialcita's edgy comedies and came away with their reputations intact.

Speaking of straight-playing gays roles, Bembol Roco's doing it to still appreciative distinction in "Beauty Queen", and don't look now, but Timo Cruz III is following suit.

Speaking of outstanding but generally underutilized talents, Timo starred his acting and singing career as Nora Aunor's frisky-ears leading man. But he's grown artistically through the years and has firmly established himself as one of our best actors.

His scissors outings are welcome, but what would really make our day would be a new movie for him and Nora, whose both of them would hit acting home runs that would send their fans into a delighted, reminiscing tizzy!

With Nora "disappearing" to come home like your after her long "exile" in the States, that now she could turn out to be more than just an aging, has-been Bathsheba. So, let's all get on our aching, creaky knees and pray to the acquired saints of cinema to make it happen.

Less vanity-prone, lately now, it really is high time for our best veteran actors to face the cameras again and teach the younger generation of TV-film stars and starlets what acting should be about.

These days, many young actors and actresses wouldn't set themselves out of their cocks and underwear. They've gone through all sorts of workshops but have been poorly taught, as all they can come up with is form and style, not substance.

They may wail and scream and weep for all they're worth, but they fail to move viewers in their heart of hearts, because they're merely pretending instead of being.

The gifted, experienced likes of Amy, Ronaldo and Timo can do "living" comfortably and most convincingly, because (unlike young, hardly-existent actors who are so full of only themselves), they have acquired the sensitivity and artistic sensibility to step out of their own selves and empathize fully with the characters they play—that they and their roles become one!

AMY Austria

TIMO Cruz III

No hosting return offer

LOS ANGELES—Golden Globe organizers on Tuesday shot down a report that comedian Ricky Gervais was asked to return to host of their program, following his recent performances in which he skewered the people that gives away the film and TV awards.

"There is no truth in this rumor. We have not asked him to come back. Nor try, Ricky," Philip Berk, president of the group that gives out the Golden Globes, said in a statement.

Berk's statement came in response to an online posting by British magazine Sycat of a diary German had written during the week leading up to the Jan. 16 Golden Globes ceremony in Beverly Hills. He wrote that after the program, "organizers asked me to consider retired now."

Instead, Golden Globe jobs pointed to a lawsuit filed against the Hollywood Foreign Press Association only days ahead of the widely-watched program that by members accepted lavish entertainment and gifts from movie studios looking for their votes. Reuters

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MARQUEE MALL

Maricar Reyes unmasked

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

JUST how long can Maricar Reyes pursue a show biz career while acutely maintaining her privacy?

So far she has limited her encounters with the press—but some inquisitive reporters dare ask about a certain controversy that would've pushed less determ ined to go on cold.

But she remains very visible in the scene, primarily because of her role on the ABS-CBN primetime series "Imortal" and her endorsement deal with jewelry firm Kana World.

After some initial hesitation from her handlers, she finally agreed to fill her veil of mystery via an e-mail interview with the Inquirer.

A doctor by profession, Maricar related that she's able to dwindle between the two worlds rather effortlessly.

"I prioritize," she explained. "These days, more time is devoted to acting. Maybe there will come a season when I'll be involved in both or endeavors."

She considers medicine her day job.

"I want to maintain a workable level of professionalism in both my careers as a doctor and as an actress," she pointed out.

Do her patients do a double-take whenever she takes their blood pressure?

"They are surprised," she conceded. "But honestly their reaction doesn't last that long."

It can be disconcerting, especially when a patient realizes that this doctor plays a supernatural creature on television.

Is that what she finds exciting about her "night job? "She can leap tall buildings in a single bound," she quipped.

She hopes to do an indie film soon. "Anything different is worth exploring."

On top of medicine and acting, she has found a new job as jewelry designer for Kana World. "I share my ideas and suggestions," she related.

She described her fashion philosophy as "simple and classic." She looks up to Audrey Hepburn and Angel Aquino as style icons. "They still look elegant even in simple clothes. It's at the way they carry themselves."

CHEEK FACTOR

RED-EYED Maricar, in an interview aired on "Bandila," on the postponement of session complaint filed against him before the Department of Justice: "After we held the preliminary conference last year, you just have to refer it to the trial court. Let our lawyers stay to defend ... Doon tayo hari sarapat."

Janet Jackson tonight at PICC

SHOW TIME

JANET Jackson's "Number Ones: Up Close and Personal" concert tour opens tonight at 8 at the PICC Plenary Hall, Pasay. The show, which Jackson describes as "not about spousal effects" but more of "singing and dancing from my heart," focuses on the biggest hits of her entire career.

Charity show at SM City Sta. Rosa

"Heart to Heart," billed as an inspirational fulvestrant charity show, features Neil Solanki, Dulce, Ferima Soriano, Michael Angelo Lobaia, and The Grenada Sisters tomorrow 7 p.m. at The Event Center of SM City Sta. Rosa, Laguna. The event is being mounted to prepare for the 10th anniversary of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in South City Homes, Antioch. Adrian Pangasinan directs the Oasis of Love production. Call (049) 411-2195.

For KPop fans

Kyu Jong and Young Saeng of the KPop group SS501 already are from their Ahtisa tour sensation at the PICC. The event will consist of a meet-and-greet at the PICC's Forum 2 facility at 8:30 p.m., followed by a performance showcase. Some 1800 VIP ticket holders, to be chosen via a raffle, will have the chance to get up close with Kyu Jong and Young Saeng. The first 500 Green-section ticket holders will have the chance to bring home an autographed poster. Call 891-9999 or 224-3291.

CHS do-or-dance event

The Commit is one of the featured performers in "Spirit of the Class," a dance-or-die event mounted by the College of the Holy Spirit Manila Foundation tonight at 6 at the North Greenhills Clubhouse, Johnson St., Greenhills, San Juan. Also performing are the Pentecostes Band and Ed Montes. The event is a prelude to the 100th anniversary of the College of the Holy Spirit Manila. Dinner tickets are available at the gate.

Kenny Loggins at SMX

Adventure debuts to singer-songwriter Kenny Loggins' concert on May 22 at the SMX Convention Center, SM Mall of Asia complex in Pasay are now available for purchase. Loggins, originally a member of the folk-rock duo Loggins and Messina, went solo in 1977 and released the albums "Celebrate Me Home," "Nightwatch," "Keep the Fire," "High Advenure," among others. He also became well-sought-after soundtrack composer of film soundtracks. He remains an active recording and performing artist. Call 891-9999 or 470-2222.

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

Movies, schedules from subject to change without prior notice

need a job?

TOM Burton and Helena Bonham Carter

Helena...

See page E5

playing the Queen (Mother)?

I did meet people who knew her quite well and I read some biographies. ... Williams Shawcross happened to publish the official biography just when I got the part, but it was so bland that it gave me no clues to the real woman. Hugo Vickers wrote another one that was much more astute. He gave me the Cecil Beaton quote that described her as a marshmallow but made with a swelling intention... And by meeting lots of people, I've built a picture of her but... I had to mark out what was suitable to the story.

Can you describe your overall experience making the "Harry Potter" movies?

I loved doing them. It was really convenient for me, too, because I had Will on it. The trouble is me too far from where we live. Billy was young. There are lots of logistics to consider once you have children. You work around the movies. I love my characters. It was a real honour to go in work and scream a lot. It was very therapeutic.

E-mail the columnist at rempulse_3000@yahoo.com.

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Helena Bonham Carter on playing Queen Mum, living and working with Tim Burton

LOS ANGELES... "He looks like a used professor but he's very solid," **Helena Bonham Carter** described her partner, brilliant director **Tim Burton**. Helena, whose curly mass of hair is threatening to upstage Tim's famous solid mane, talked to us about living and working with the filmmaker.

Helena also discussed playing the Queen Mother in director **Tom Hooper**'s "The King's Speech," for which she scored Golden Globe and Academy Best Supporting Actress nominations. It is in Helena's

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD
Rodney U. Segodor

credit that she's getting some of the best scenes of her career in an "excellent" role and against the nice team of **Colin Firth** as King George VI and **Geoffrey Rush** as a speech therapist. The actress may

HELENA Bonham Carter quotes Zsa Zsa Gabor's description of Queen Elizabeth, wife of King George VI, as "a nice hat on a ... a table with a wedding machine."

the Queen Mum several times, most memorably in "A Room With a View," the film that helped launch her acting career.

Below are excerpts from our interview.

In the film, your character is very supportive of her husband. In real life, how do you support Tim?

Not freely. I am jealous.

Can you give examples?

I work for him. I make sure he's well fed. Hopefully when I get back, he's going to cook for me. I have a lot of sympathy for the pressures of directing—the degree of patience and listening to his crazy schemes he's on the job because there's quite considerable.

How close Tim help with the kids?

We're doing parenting classes together now because a lot of times, when something happens, we just look at each other and go, "Well, what do we do now?" We're just completely clueless. But it's a fun-loving thing. He's very supportive of me, too. Tim is very connected. He looks like a mad professor but he's very solid. He's very conventionally intelligent.

In a previous interview you said to that your house has a Tim Burton wing. Have you added anything to your house since then?

I am not sure if I should talk about this.... Other people seem to exaggerate the whole thing, but I did add a gypsy caravan which is where my daughter lives. It's attached to the house so don't come up, we don't rock her out in the garden [laughing].... But it's quite fun and lets her get on with things. She's only 2, and a half years old.

You have a diminutive way of dressing. Do you dress your own kids?

No. It's the story of my life. What's the point of having a daughter without being able to dress her up? Bull has definitely got her own sense of style. She does someone changes every 10 minutes. Last Halloween, she wanted to be a darkness, a demonic, scarecrow and a witch.

Can you discuss the process when Tim sends you the first movies?

If anything he sends me really great inheritance [laughing] because the doesn't want it for us always and he's worried about outcomes and all sorts of things.

You're not serious about the acquisition inverted, are you?

I think Tim just feels like it's not necessarily healthy to either of us. There are certain processes about working together. There was talk in [where's her voice like on "Alice in Wonderland," that went well. We had different moments in "Sweeney Todd." But on "Alice..." I ended up making a style for it of communication or how to work together and we abided by them.

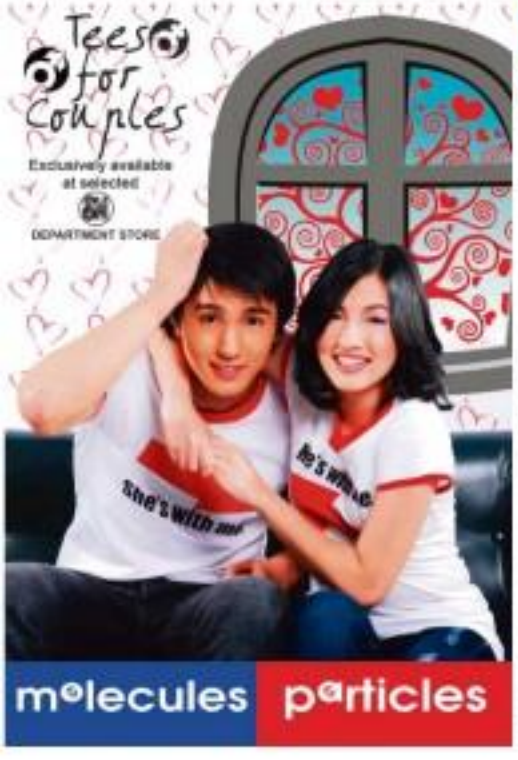
What are those rules?

I shouldn't talk on the set. I have to watch what my mouth says. I should think before I speak because a lot of times, I talk too much. It drives him up the wall when he's trying to concentrate. I tend to come out with funny things so I like to say we would do it that way and I get excited by options and he actually wants triumph.

Generally he jokes. We've got to have one class an show. ... person which are very different because basically I make all the decisions in book. It's that there has on the set, he makes the decisions so I have to become the prime woman.

How did you research about

READ P. 32



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